Famous Artists Painting Course

Famous Artists Schools, Inc., Westport, Connecticut

Section 1

The major movements in painting

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Dorothy Gees Seckler

Fine Arts Advisor — Famous Artists Schools, Inc.

Dorothy Gees Seckler, in her professional career, has amassed an imposing background of experience that makes her exceptionally well qualified to discuss art in terms understandable to the amateur painter. An Associate Editor of *Art News* since 1949, she edits the "Amateur Standing" page and contributes numerous feature articles to the magazine. Many of these have described the painting methods of well-known contemporary artists, on the basis of interviews and on-the-spot observation. As a lecturer on the staff of the Museum of Modern Art from 1945 to 1949, Mrs. Seckler explained in her talks the basic developments in contemporary art movements. Her audiences included people from all walks of life and widely diversified backgrounds. From 1947 to 1952 she lectured on the history of art as an instructor at the School of Education of New York University. Subsequently she received a B.S. Degree in Art Education from Teachers College, Columbia University, and continued her studies at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University. A leisure-time painter herself, Mrs. Seckler received professional training as an artist in a four-year course at the Maryland Institute of Art in Baltimore. Upon graduation she was awarded a traveling scholarship to Europe and subsequently studied independently in Rome, Florence, and Paris. This unusual combination of practical knowledge and experience as painter, teacher, and critic has enabled Mrs. Seckler to analyze painting of the past and present with a special view to the problems and questions you will have as a practicing amateur artist.

A primer of the major movements in painting

As a leisure-time artist you will be looking at paintings with a new and inquiring interest. Whatever your approach, you will undoubtedly find that your own struggles as well as your discoveries with brushes and paint are stimulating a more attentive examination of painting methods. The story interest, which for so many people is the only response to a picture, will be for you only one aspect of its meaning. Equally important to you will be the way the artist puts down paint, the kinds of colors and shapes he uses and the way they are brought into a unity. You will notice not only what the artist took from nature but also what he left out of the optical reality. You will begin to understand that these selections in themselves reveal a distinct point of view. Whether or not you share a particular artist's outlook, you are often able to concede that his method has its own logic.

The pages that follow are intended to provide a key to the objectives and methods of the main movements in traditional and modern painting. This is presented in the form of a digest which has been made as clear and objective as possible. It deals less with subject matter or with individual variations than with the ideas and methods on the form of painting which were shared by a body of artists in each period.

Although the various movements are presented chronologically in a roughly historical sequence, the emphasis is on the changes in the languages of art forms rather than on art history and its outstanding personalities. Works illustrated were chosen because they typified a specific style, and pictures by many great masters have been omitted. In outlining the characteristics of any given movement it has been impossible to indicate how differently the participating artists applied the same principles. The variety of illustrations included in every section should, however, help the student to see for himself how wide was the range of variation even where attitudes and methods were shared.

Diagrams have been used throughout to make as explicit as possible the definition of shapes and their relationships. It is hoped they will reveal structural qualities common to old and modern masters alike and applicable to your own paintings.

Although each section can be studied independently, you will find it helpful at some time to review the entire section in sequence. In that way you will notice that artists, when they had solved one problem, tended to move on to other problems. Having developed a way of composing with values in an even light, artists tackled composing with values in a concentrated light. They did not automatically produce better pictures, but usually they created forms more suitable to their own times. Composing with colored light, the last of the elements to be explored was introduced only in the last century. Since then artists have combined all the previously developed elements in the most diverse ways. They have proved that no one way of building a picture is entirely superior. Each has its advantages and limitations. In art, progress has consisted of the development of more and more choices.

In order to arrive at a rounded understanding of painting, the reader is urged to supplement the analytical and objective description offered here by acquaintance with some of the historical background it has been necessary for us to leave out. Only when forms are seen as expressions of human needs and ideas will their significance be really understood.

This text is not designed to persuade you to like any particular style, but to enable you to study in an objective way all the various languages of painting. I have tried to show that there are many choices that can be made and many valid ways of looking at the world and painting it. I hope that it will help you choose those kinds of lines, shapes and colors which correspond to your own needs.

Linear expression of ancient peoples

The images conceived by most ancient peoples were represented as shapes surrounded by a line, with more emphasis on flat silhouettes than on volumes. Usually painted on the walls of tombs and temples, they conformed to the two-dimensional surface, with very little indication of depth. Shapes were conceived at least partially as symbols related to writing and often expressed in similar rhythmic repetitions. PAGE 4

Analytical realism of the Renaissance

When the need arose, during the Renaissance, to describe rather than to symbolize forms, figures and objects alike were analyzed into their component basic volumes and each separate part was modeled in tones evenly graduated from one edge to the other. Lines were no longer necessary, since changes in value clearly defined the boundaries of each form. The picture had begun to take on the character of a window in depth rather than a flat, decorative surface. PAGE 6

Luminous realism of the 17th Century

In the 17th Century artists developed new ways of using values that corresponded to their more dramatic interests in subject matter. Replacing the diffused lighting of Renaissance pictures with a spotlight illumination from concentrated beams, they obtained forms broken abruptly into dark and light patches (chiaroscuro). In this new type of compositional scheme, light played its own game through the picture space, with some parts of forms sharply defined, others submerged in areas of shadow. PAGE 10

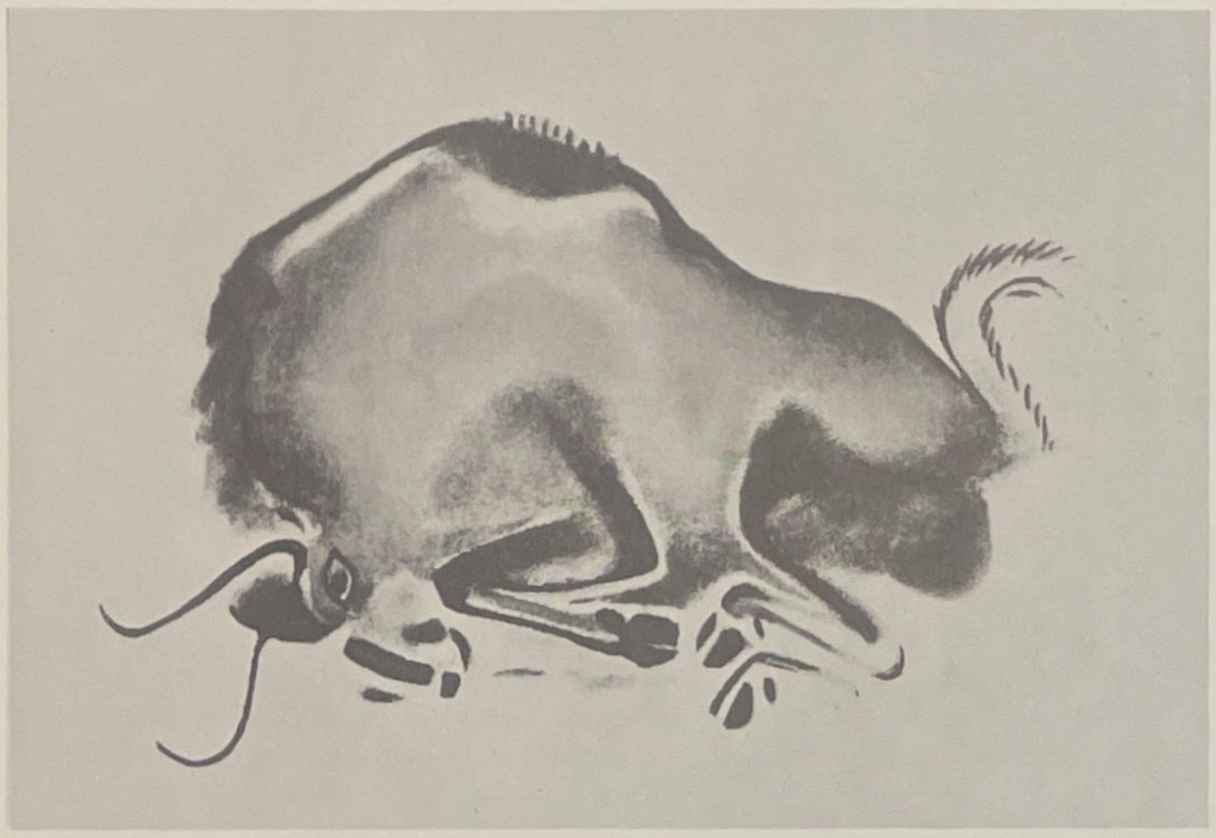
Impressionism — pure color composition in the late 19th Century

In the centuries that followed the Renaissance, many artists experimented with adding touches of warm and cool color to forms modeled in values. It was not until the 19th Century that the Impressionists took the radical step of working directly with almost pure colors. Influenced by the revelations made by scientists studying light through the spectrum, the Impressionists translated into its rainbow hues the variations of light on every surface. Their method of applying the paint in daubs produced blurred edges which appeared as solid forms only when viewed at a slight distance. PAGE 14

Post-Impressionism —
combined pictorial elements of today's painting

Since about the turn of the century, the elements of pictorial composition, from the most ancient to the most modern, have been combined in many diverse ways. Post-Impressionists, Fauves and Expressionists used rhythmic outlines derived from Oriental art and from pre-Renaissance styles. The early Cubists returned briefly to value composition while Realists and Magic-Realists also by-passed Impressionist color innovations, and adopted modeling with values to the requirements of new kinds of subject matter. Today's styles reflect qualities of all four basic ways of composing. PAGE 20

Linear expression of ancient peoples



This bison painted on the walls of a subterranean cave by members of a hunting tribe of the Paleolithic age (about 25,000 years ago) is an example of man's earliest use of line to enclose form. The making of such images was motivated apparently by the tribe's urge to create within its own province a magically potent symbol of the live animal on which life depended. Although filled in with color that suggests some depth, the image is mainly defined with lines, especially parts like the split hooves and bristly tail, which became fixed in the hunter's memory image.

Two kinds of line

Enclosing a shape with a line can be thought of in two different ways: the outline can be regarded as a convention representing the edges of solid shapes, or a line may be used as a means closely related to handwriting, and sharing the condensation, motor emphasis and rhythmic quality of calligraphy. In the first case the image is apt to be indicated in a deep, pictorial space; in the second method, the two-dimensional character of the space is preserved, just as it is in writing on a page.

Lines move up and across

The characters of most written languages have in common that they are inscribed on the flat surface of a page in a manner derived from movements of the hand. Meaning is not dependent on any illusion of depth. Actually most written characters are only highly simplified and schematic descendants of the picture images used as symbols by our earliest ancestors. Our Roman capital "A" for example, is thought to be a reduced and upside-down version of a bull's head. In China, writing and picture making have remained very closely allied arts even today.

This symbolic quality is shared by arts as diverse as the cave paintings of the Paleolithic age, ancient Egyptian frescoes, Chinese scroll painting and medieval religious illustration. Directness, reduction of means and conformity to the flat surface were other characteristics typified by calligraphy and also common to these historic arts.

Remembering rather than looking

It was also characteristic of most historic linear expressions that they were produced without immediate reference to nature. The hunter of the stone age, working deep in the recesses of a subterranean cavern, could not have directly observed the real bison he pictured; nor could the Egyptian, painting the Pharaoh and his retinue on the walls of a tomb, consult the royal features. Chinese artists were bidden by their ancient codes to paint a landscape only after its most essential aspects had been absorbed (after observation and reflection) and fixed in memory.

Line expresses a selection

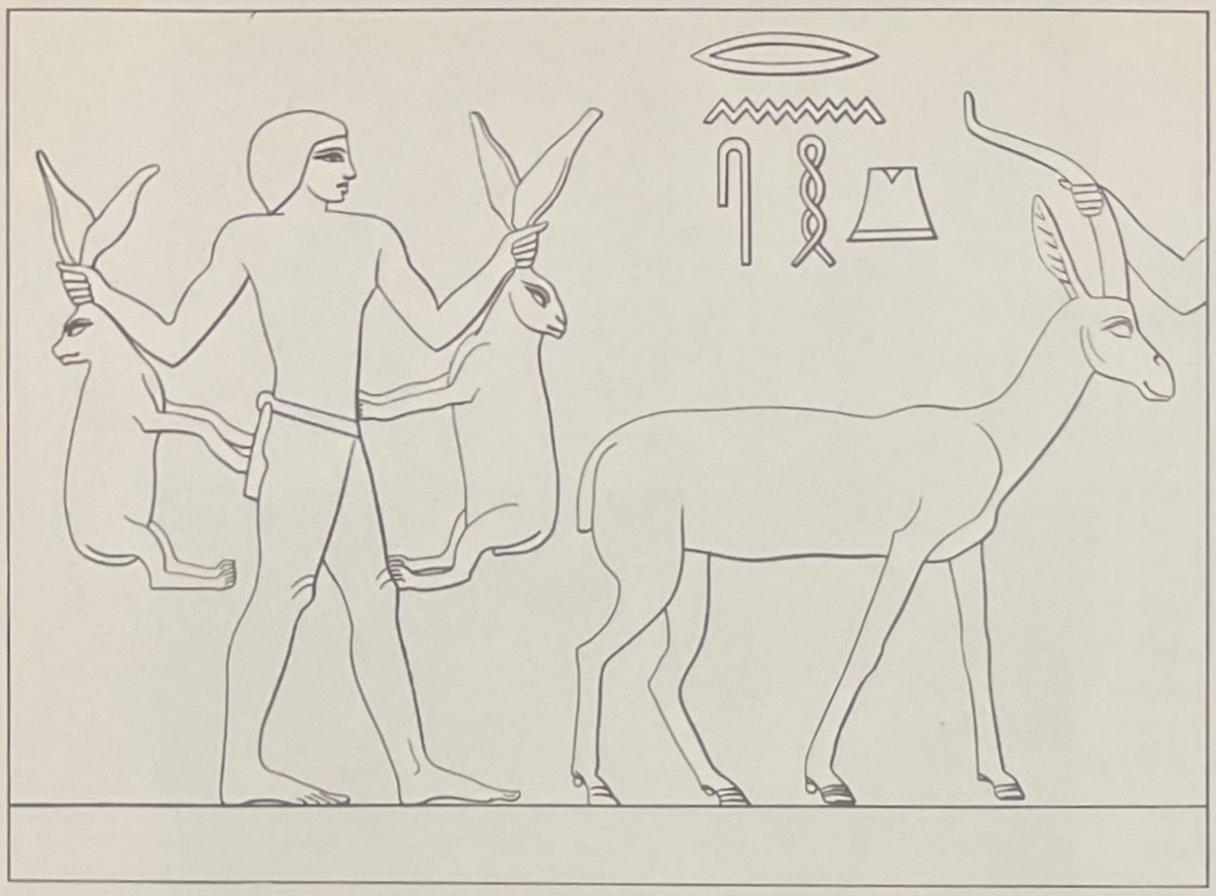
The result of this method of working from remembered images is a concentration on certain significant qualities and the suppression of others. Ordinarily the most permanent and revealing aspects will be recorded — the five fingers of a hand, the upward direction of tree branches parting from the trunk and so on. The Egyptians carried this process so far that they represented each part of the body from the viewpoint that displayed its most characteristic qualities.

Motor emphasis

Making a line may involve a whole movement of the arm, as it seems to have for the cave artist, or it may require merely the movement of the wrist and fingers. In any case it produces a heightened awareness of movement. The movement of the hand and the brush is apt to be identified with the action or motion of the image itself. The brush of the Chinese artist, in indicating a bit of drapery, suggests both the gesture of the hand and the flutter of the garment itself. The line thus becomes a way of mimicking the thing portrayed through a process now recognized and studied by psychologists under the name of "Empathy."

Decorative rhythms

To the extent that the movements of the hand over the page fall into a rhythm, they may be compared to a dance. They may be alternately fluid and sharp, like the motion of the Chinese brush



The Egyptians developed their traditional techniques to a high degree of refinement, combining descriptive and symbolic qualities. In this drawing from the painted walls of the tomb of Menofre, figures and animals are reduced to essentials and flattened almost as much as the hieroglyphic characters in the background. The convention of combining a frontal view of the eyes and shoulders with a profile view of the head and feet conforms to an idea of the figure existing in the mind, rather than to optical reality.

Line was especially suitable for the religious illustrations of the Middle Ages, like this manuscript illumination showing St. Luke (Gospel from the Church of St. Severin), because it was the function of the picture to convey a spiritual rather than a physical reality. The unreal proportion of the figure to the architectural background and the distorted angles of rooftops present a symbolic and not an actual space. The elaboration of folds in the drapery is designed to create a rhythm expressive of an attitude of devotional intensity.

The calligraphic (handwriting) style of this picture, called **Portrait of Chung Kwei,** painted nearly a thousand years ago in China, typifies the linear brush techniques basic to Chinese (and most Oriental) art from ancient to modern times. Into each lively stroke the unknown painter has concentrated a wealth of remembered (rather than directly observed) qualities of the figure. The line has a liveliness derived from the fact that it simultaneously suggests two kinds of movement—the action of the figure itself and the gesture of the hand making the line.

CHINESE, SUNG DYNASTY 960-1280
Portrait of Chung Kwei
Courtesy of The Philadelphia Museum of Art

Women Folding Their Clothes, traced on the inside of a flat Greek vase in the 5th Century B.C., represents a modification toward realism, of the ancient linear styles. Here the outline is used to indicate the edges of shapes conceived as solid volumes, overlapping in a recessed space. The symbolic quality is thus less important.

or stately like the Egyptian with the rhythm created by the intervals between shapes. The very fact that movements are strongly defined and conform to the surface favors a decorative effect.

Modern revival

Painting with line, after being relegated to a very minor role in Western art during about five centuries, was reintroduced by the Post-Impressionists, especially Van Gogh and Gauguin. In the twentieth century, as the objective shifted from factual representation to emotional or plastic interpretation, line has played an increasingly important role in painting. The linear forms of this revival, however, usually also reflect many elements stemming from the spatial and analytical modes of the Renaissance. There is always a new synthesis and a different and wider potentiality for expression.

Analytical realism of the Renaissance

BOTTICELLI
The Madonna of the Eucharist
Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston

The Renaissance revolution in form (analytical realism)

The techniques of the universally familiar masterpieces of European art are often referred to as if they had existed always, yet actually, they were radical innovations when they were first introduced about five centuries ago in Italy.

From wall to window

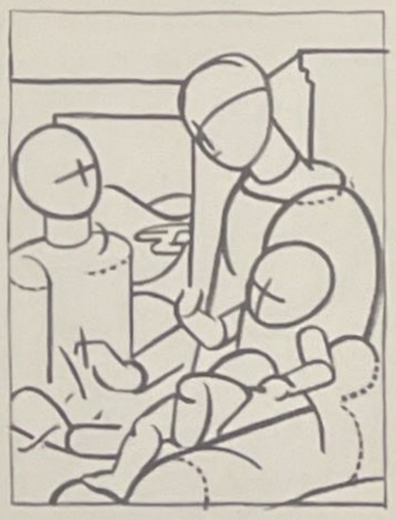
For almost a thousand years the flat linear forms of mosaics, frescoes and stained glass had preserved on the walls and windows of churches, the stories and lessons of the Christian faith for all to read. Now, under the impact of the new spirit of scientific inquiry, the religious drama was being transferred to a setting in the natural world and many subjects from the everyday world were entering the domain of art. The movable canvases and panels that gained in popularity over wall decoration, though in fact two-dimensional, lent themselves to the *illusionistic suggestion of a window-like space* (as opposed to the obviously decorative function of the church wall). Even where frescoes continued to be painted, artists imitated the novel illusionistic effects of depth.

As always, this new art did not spring up ready-made, but was evolved from the older forms. The art of line was only very gradually turned to the new purpose. Lines instead of being used to describe silhouettes, were employed to define solid volumes. Increasingly the lines were filled in with tone, and forms were placed one behind another in deep space.

The scientific spirit

So many aspects of nature, formerly ignored, were now admitted as appropriate subjects for painting, that it seemed as if both artist and audience were seeing the world around them for the first time. Where formerly plants and animals were pictured only to illustrate symbolically some mystical religious significance, they were now studied and drawn with scrupulous attention to their real qualities. Man who had been regarded by earlier artists chiefly as an object for salvation was now studied as a mechanism of nerves, skin, bone and muscle. The study of anatomy became a necessity for artists and Leonardo da Vinci is said to have dissected more than twenty corpses.

Botticelli's **Madonna of the Eucharist** (1447-1510) is a splendid example of the formally planned picture. The figures, arranged in a pyramidal scheme that underlines the mood of serene repose, all represent the kind of ideal types that emerged as the composite of many studies. Lines clearly define the edges of parts of the body which seem constructed on simple geometrical forms, especially spheres, ovoids and cylinders (as shown in the diagram). The picture has been built up in stages; the forms were first drawn in line, then modeled with smooth gradations of tone which stay well within the bounding outlines. Color, in transparent glazes, was added last.



From a Baltimore Collection

This constructed view of a Piazza by Laurana exemplifies the Renaissance artist's fascination with the new optical science of perspective. In the buildings that make up this invented city square the ancient classical orders of architecture are displayed in forms that are based on cylinders, polygons, cones and other geometrical shapes. Note that two rectangular buildings with facades parallel to the picture plane give stability to a composition in which most other lines are drawn to the remote central vanishing point.

The engraving of **Battle of Nude Men** by Antonio Pollaiuolo (1433-1496) typifies the concern with scientific anatomy which impelled so many Renaissance painters to dissect cadavers that laws were passed to prohibit the practice.

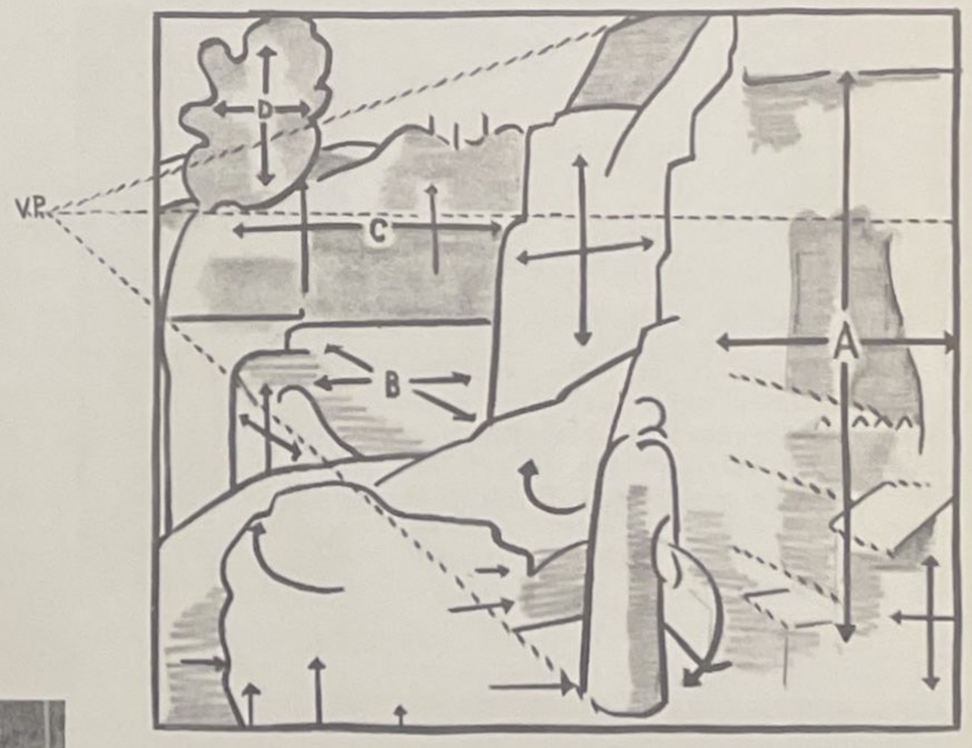
The sculptural ideal of the Greeks and Romans

The artist was inspired in his researches by the example of the Greek and Roman artists of antiquity. Although so remote in time, these arts of the ancient world were recognized by the Renaissance painter as having sprung from a rational and inquiring spirit like that of his own time. Fragments of classical sculpture which had elicited but little interest in the towns where they remained, were rediscovered, analyzed and admired. As the sculptural ideal gained over the linear, figures in paintings were treated as if renderings of marble forms. Even landscapes took on the basic forms of cones, cylinders, cubes and spheres.

Perspective

As pictures came to be thought of as windows into space, it became important to convey the placement of forms in the picture space according to an optical system rather than a symbolic one. On the walls of medieval churches each saint had been pictured in a size and position that depended on his place in the religious hierarchy. Such a generalized grouping gave no sense of being seen from a specific vantage point. Now, however, when the figures were presented as real people in actual settings, it was necessary to represent recession from the standpoint of an individual spectator. Uccello and others worked out, by mechanical means, the exact laws of diminution of sizes according to distance from the viewer, and demonstrated how edges of solids appear to converge to vanishing points on the horizon.

GIOVANNI BELLINI
St. Francis in Ecstasy
The Frick Collection



In his **Saint Francis in Ecstasy,** Giovanni Bellini (1430-1516) employs the typical division into foreground, middle ground and background (as shown by planes marked A, B and C in the diagram). Although worked out meticulously in perspective, the picture includes an independent plane structure: planes A and D are parallel to the picture plane and background plane C is nearly so. Arrows show how the modeling of rocky ledges sets up movements to and around the figure. The detail makes clear the geometric and analytical treatment of even the smallest part that makes up this impressive whole.

Box-like space

The space represented in Renaissance pictures is often vast. Artists were fascinated by their new ability to suggest the extension of a world which was, at that time, actually being enlarged on maps by the explorations of new continents. The artist was not content with merely suggesting vast space; he tried to define it in a very exact way. Even when panoramic views of mountains, seas and cities were represented, they were plotted as if contained in a great box. Ordinarily three rather distinct divisions in this box-like arena included a foreground, in which figures were apt to be grouped, a background which was like the more perpendicular back of the box, and between them a middle ground which was frequently level.

The picture is the product of planned stages

All of these new techniques of the Renaissance resulted in a far more intellectual and formal art than we know today and one which involved careful organization. A picture was not undertaken casually or impulsively, but was usually commissioned by some powerful patron. Its subject elements as well as their disposition was planned in advance and often dozens of preliminary sketches were made of figures, parts of figures and settings.

Composition

The artist's concern, in composing his picture – a process involving careful studies and numerous revisions – was to arrive at the most clear, enduring and significant presentation of his subject. Thus, although the painter increasingly sought a novel presentation of traditional religious themes, and even introduced figures from pagan (Greek) mythology, it never occurred to him to offer them in a momentary or accidental aspect. The picture was thought of as something that had to endure and present a constant meaning.

Pyramidal and symmetrical schemes

Arrangements that suggested this quality of the fixed and enduring were preferred. A common device that conveyed great stability was to group figures on either side of a central division in a symmetrical balance or to dispose them in a pyramidal scheme in relation to elements in the background. Even when the arrangement was asymmetrical, the composition was usually contrived so the eye would focus on a center of interest.

Planes and geometry

At first some Renaissance painters were so intrigued by the new science of perspective that they neglected the structure of planes parallel to the picture surface. The result was that their pictures, with all forms plunging toward the distance, seemed to have holes in them. The real masters, however, soon corrected this error. As a counterbalance to movements toward the horizon, they established bold planes anchoring the structure of shapes to the picture surface.

PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA
St. John the Evangelist
The Frick Collection

Piero della Francesca's **St. John the Evangelist** shows precise details on garments, book and beard. Such elaborations, however, are absorbed into an over-all structure in which both line and tone are combined to create a powerful mass. The detail of feet reveals the characteristically impersonal surface in which brush strokes have been suppressed, perhaps by rubbing with the finger.

This detail from the painting below reconstructs the method by which the paint appears to have been applied. Read from bottom to top:

3 He then painted a final coating of semi-transparent oil glazes to produce the delicate play of shadow.

2 Over this he applied a partially opaque wash of pink.

1 The artist first made a sketchy undermodeling in brown tempera.

ROGIER VAN DER WEYDEN
Portrait of a Lady
From "The Artist at Work" by H. Ruheman, Penguin Books, Ltd.

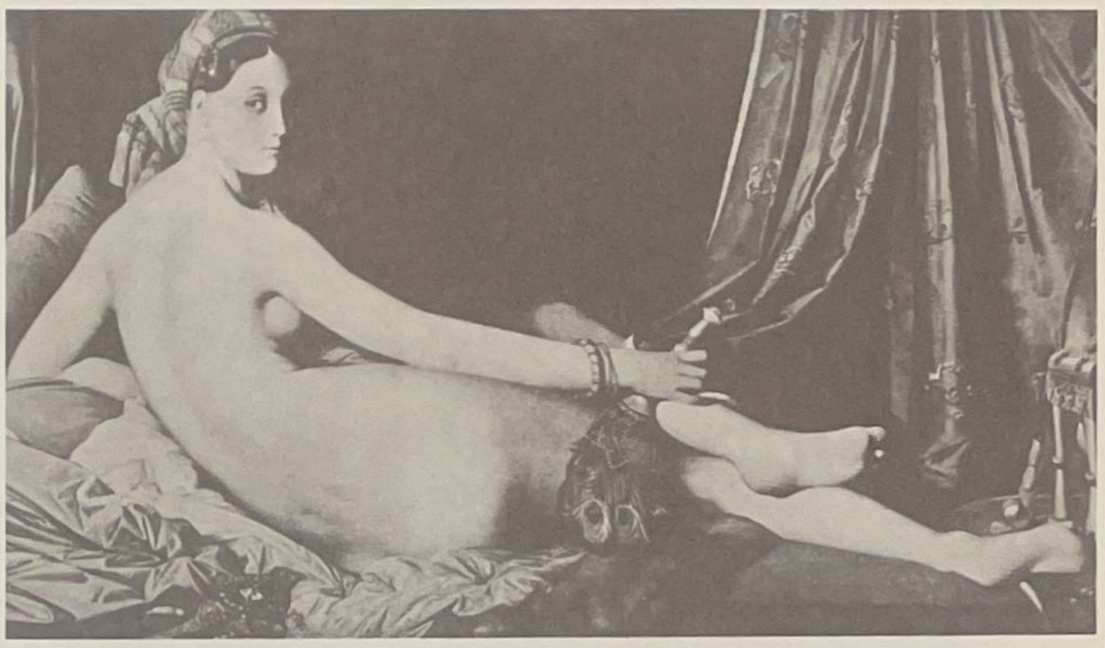
Rogier Van Der Weyden (1400-1464) in his **Portrait of a Lady,** at the right, shows the precise detail and smooth transition from light to dark made possible by the use of oil glazes, a medium that had been introduced in Flanders only about a quarter of a century before. The use of oil glazes over undermodeling in tempera spread from the north to Italy, where it was the most popular technique of the Renaissance.

Courtesy of The National Gallery, London

MICHELANGELO
Libyan Sibyl
Courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Michelangelo's (1475-1564) Libyan Sibyl, a pagan (Greek) subject executed on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican, shows how he used the figure to create volumes extending into space in a forward and backward movement. Powerful twisting movements and strong chiaroscuro mark Michelangelo's art as a traditional one between the Renaissance and 17th Century styles.

INGRES
Reclining Odalisque
The Louvre



Ingres, who headed the French Academy in the early years of the 19th Century, revitalized methods of painting derived from the Renaissance, methods based on exacting draftsmanship and underpainting in values before application of color with oil glazes. His **Reclining or "Grande" Odalisque,** 1814, shows his use of these techniques in a typically 19th Century Romantic subject.

Values

With studies completed the artist was ready to begin work on his final panel or canvas. Usually a fine white gesso ground (and perhaps also a white priming) would have been prepared and applied by one of his apprentices. Over this the painter first laid in the forms with a monochrome of grey or brown, usually in tempera. The fine strokings or hatchings characteristic of this undermodeling (which varied from sketchy to elaborate) were sometimes partially suppressed either by rubbing with the finger or by coating over with a wash of pale color. Generally, at no stage of the picture was the brushwork allowed to become conspicuous. (Venetian masters of the high Renaissance were an exception.) Since the picture surface was thought of as a window pane, it seemed desirable to keep it clear and transparent in effect.

The amount of underpainting varied from artist to artist but the general effect was one of smoothly modulated tones flowing around each separate part of a form. Sharp highlights and sudden contrasts were avoided. The gradations of tone from bumps to hollows in each surface, similar to those noted on statuary when seen in an even light, suggest that the artist has derived his interpretation partly from tactile (sense of touch) sensations rather than purely visual ones.

Color in transparent glazes

After the form structure had been indicated in the underpainting, color was applied separately, and often in successive semi-transparent coatings. Contrary to the general belief, Renaissance artists did not have superior pigments. Actually their selection of colors was far more limited than ours. If the old masters' hues appear brilliant, it is mainly because of the skill with which they were used. In some cases light striking through the layers of oil glazes to the light tempera undercoating produced luminous effects comparable to those of stained glass. Even more important was the fact that the Renaissance artist was always prepared to make the most of limited means through a play of contrasts. To make a vermillion appear brilliant, he would surround it with deep values and subdue every adjacent color. Then, as today, artists realized that obtaining the most from color is as much a matter of relationship, as it is of chemistry.

Analytical form perpetuated through the centuries

Although the analytical point of view was general throughout the 15th Century, particular elements of style varied considerably from artist to artist. Especially after the peak of the Renaissance, painters tended to break away from the accepted modes. Three of the greatest masters, in fact, had, in their mature work, explored directions leading to the Baroque: Leonardo, through his use of blurred edges; Michelangelo, by his powerful chiaroscuro and twisting movements; and Titian through his loose brushwork and accents of contrasting hues.

In spite of the development of more fluid and luminous styles, some artists, in the following three centuries, chose to carry forward the analytical tradition of the Renaissance. Inevitably there were many who employed these modes mechanically, as a formula, with the usual mediocre results. However those like Poussin and Ingres, in the 17th and 19th Centuries respectively, who brought to their work a fresh spirit and an individual point of view, were able to infuse the traditional forms with a life and character reflecting the different sensibility of their own times. The obligation to make a new synthesis of old and new still holds for those painters today who find in the analytical approach a way corresponding to their own needs of expression.

Luminous realism of the 17th Century

CARAVAGGIO
Boy Bitten by a Lizard
The Museum of Modern Art (Lent by Prof. Roberto Longhi, Rome)

Boy Bitten by a Lizard typifies the kind of picture that made Caravaggio (1573-1610) the leader of a new movement in painting that was to become widespread throughout Europe in the 17th Century. Although rendered with precise edges, the subject with its exaggerated, "caught at a moment" character was a radical departure in Italy, where classical tradition prescribed idealized types in fixed attitudes. An important innovation was the light streaming in a powerful beam from the left and dividing the form abruptly into lighted and darkened parts.

At the beginning of the 17th Century it must have seemed that nothing remained for future artists but to emulate the perfected forms of the Renaissance. Yet life in this tumultuous time was engendering changed art forms, forms not automatically better than those of the 15th and 16th Centuries but more suited to the individualism and restlessness of the period.

Caravaggio, pioneer of the new method

In Italy in the late 16th Century, the Church was shocked by paintings of saints who were represented with the unkempt faces and dirty feet of peasants. They were by Caravaggio, a painter who rendered his forms as if lighted by spot lights that left large parts of the picture in darkness. In spite of disapproval, within half a century artists all over Europe were following the direction set by the rebel Italian innovator.

The range of the new 17th Century art was enormous — from the warmly luminous pictures by Rembrandt to the coolly lighted and strangely distorted ones of El Greco in Spain, and including also the "daylight" genre scenes in Holland. The change was not only in the fact that these painters used light directed from a specific source—a beam rather than an even illumination — it was also in the fact that they employed light to compose pictures in a new, more fluid, rhythm.

Techniques to produce luminosity

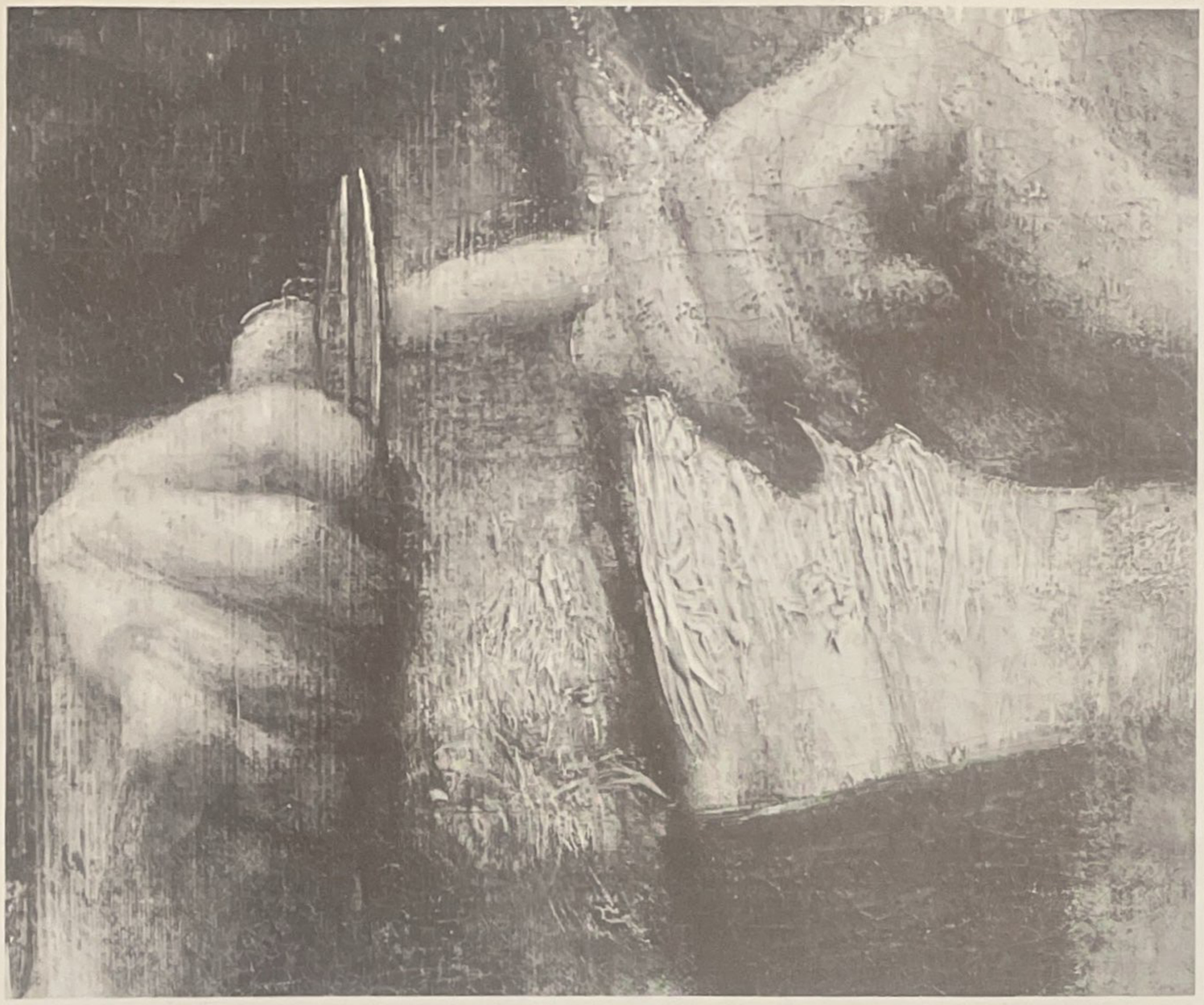
The artist still worked in his studio making studies illuminated by the light from his studio window (not at night). The luminosity of the new style resulted from arrangement, emphasis and to some extent, painting technique. Although the painter still used oil glazes over some kind of undermodelling, he now more often worked on canvas than on a wooden panel. He built up his layers of paint more rapidly, used a bolder brushstroke (with some exceptions). Even Vermeer, who retained the smooth, impersonal surface, adapted his manner to the new interest in atmosphere by skillfully blending the edges where forms meet in a delicate, pearly effect. Most artists avoided hard edges and some pulled lighter tones over darker ones at points of meeting. Shadows remained transparent and "lean" but highlights were usually put down with impasto — thick opaque paint applied with the loaded brush.

Light creates larger unities

The artist aspired to a picture organization in which large units would swallow up small, separate figures and objects. Titian, the Venetian master of the late Renaissance, used a bunch of grapes to illustrate this principle. His idea was summed up by Roger de Piles, an 18th Century writer, in these words: "the grapes being separated would have each its own light and shade equally, and thus dividing the sight into many rays, would cause confusion; but when collected into one bunch, and becoming thus but one mass of light and shade, the eye embraces them as a single object."

Perspective

While the absence of clearly defined edges in 17th Century painting removed the effect of lines moving toward vanishing points, perspective was given a new application in the extensive use of foreshortening. Exaggerated gestures of arms thrust forward or



REMBRANDT
Old Woman Cutting Her Nails
Courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art

In **Old Woman Cutting Her Nails,** Rembrandt (1606-1669) reveals his typical interest in a subject distinguished by human interest rather than ideal physical beauty. Everything about the figure is irregular: its off-center position, its tipping axis and the undulant line that swings back diagonally from the chair arm at the right to the light drapery in the left background. Lights pick out planes while the dark garments and shadowy surrounding walls merge into one another without clear demarcation. An enlarged detail shows the path of the loaded brush in a characteristic passage of high impasto.

Adoration of the Shepherds by El Greco (1542-1614) is a most extreme example of the spiralling action of the 17th Century (Baroque) composition. Movement rotates around a center axis approximately at the spot where the child is held and then flows upward and back. Radiating from the same spot is a light whose flickering beams play over the scene, flooding some areas and barely touching others. This "lost and found" game of the light, although not absolutely realistic, is not capricious. It sets up a rhythm which both suggests the infinite space of a spiritual world and expresses the ecstatic emotion of the subject.

EL GRECO
Adoration of the Shepherds
Courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art

backward from the picture plane seemed to pull the spectator into the composition and sometimes tables and chairs, placed in the immediate foreground served a similar purpose.

Diagonals and spirals

The foreshortening of forms tended to set up a scheme of diagonals moving into the space. As one plane turned obliquely into the depth another, set on a different axis, would meet it and extend the thrust. If the foreshortened planes were disposed on a curve, the effect of a spiral was apt to be created.

Light and shadow used to define space

The aggregate of these exaggerated recessional movements would have proved unpleasantly confusing had the composition not received support from other elements — especially the pattern formed by the chiaroscuro. The use of alternating lights and darks, tending to marshal numerous shapes into simplified bands of tone, helped arrest backward movement and return interest to the surface. Even with this agency of light, not every painter was able to compensate for the loss of the picture plane structure. Vermeer is the supreme example of an artist who managed to bring recessional and plane elements into a satisfying balance.

Irregularity

Just as the 17th Century artist preferred asymmetrical compositions and broken sequences of light and shade, he found also new interest in subjects which departed from the classical ideal of the Renaissance. Rembrandt painted older people, beggars and outcasts with a probing psychological concern, continuing in a more profound way the interest in types indicated by Caravaggio. El Greco represented the faces and limbs of saints in uneven and exaggerated contours, and rugged peasants were painted in France and in Holland in the locale of hearth and tavern.

The dramatic quality of light

The beauty realized by the 17th Century artist is not in the perfection of individual forms, but in dramatic qualities discovered in ordinary things and people, through the agency of light. The effective use of spotlights in our theatre today should point out for us the dramatic possibilities of this approach. The wandering beam of light transforms what it falls upon, and the shadow, sweeping around figures and objects alike, envelopes them in an equal mystery. What forms lose in clarity they gain in suggestion. The spectator is invited to fill in the gap from his imagination.

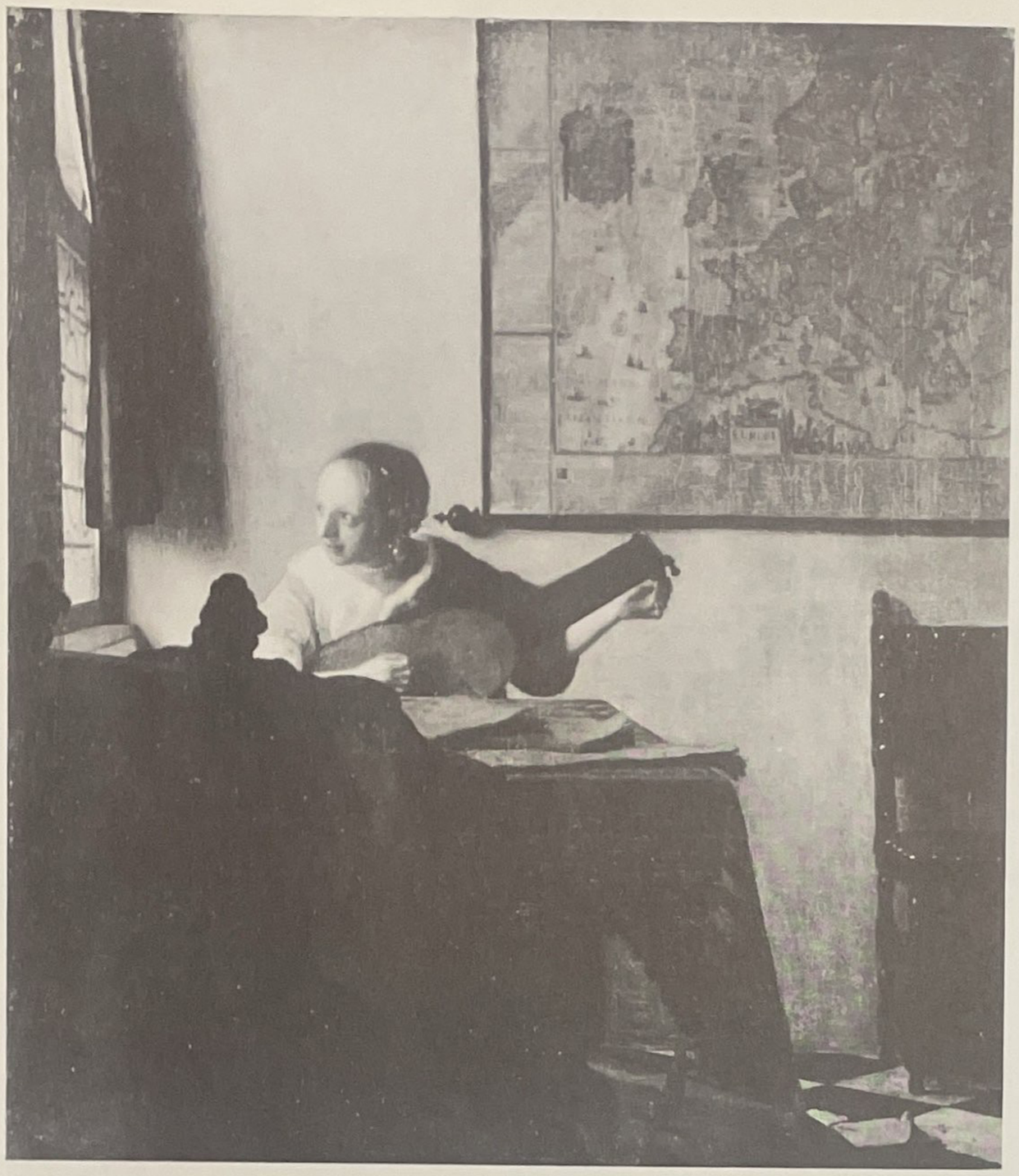
Later applications of luminist method

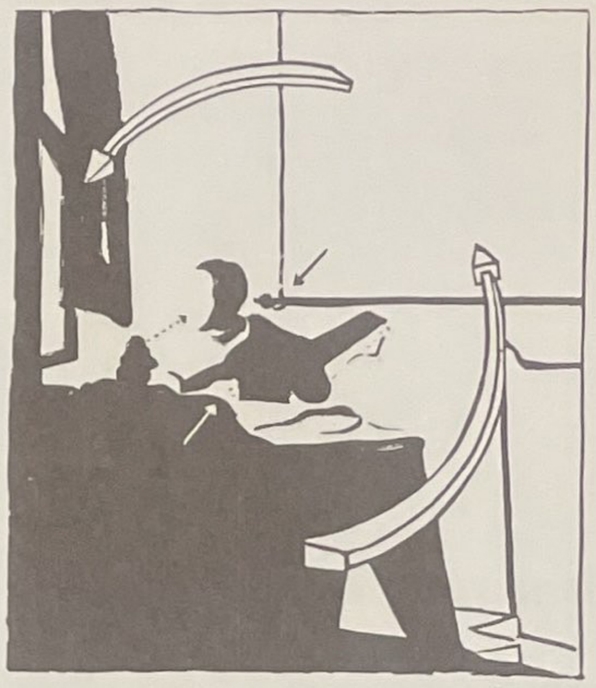
The luminist style provided a direction that was followed in the succeeding centuries by many (but by no means all) artists who adapted it to personal needs and changing historical objectives. Two centuries after Rembrandt, the chiaroscuro style was revived in a powerful way by such artists as Goya in Spain and Daumier in France, who found in it a potent means of expressing convictions on matters of social and political struggle. Turner, in England, used the luminist style as the basis for his romantic interpretations of nature. Through these artists the tradition of "light" style has been handed on to new generations. Recently the vehement brush work and psychological emphasis of Rembrandt and El Greco have been emulated by such Expressionists as Soutine and Kokoschka and, in America, by Evergood and Levine. The example of the Dutch, especially De Hooch and Vermeer, has also had a wide influence on realists and magic-realists.

FRANCISCO GOYA
The Shootings of May 3, 1808
Museo del Prado, Madrid

In **The Shootings of May 3, 1808,** the portrayal of an actual event in Spain which Goya may have witnessed, the artist employed a concentrated burst of light to sharpen the impact of the tragic episode. The composition contrasts the brutal, mechanistic character of the firing squad, whose faces are masked by shadow, with the human passion of the light-flooded victims.

JAN VERMEER
Lady with a Lute
Courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art





Vermeer (1632-1675) was outstanding in a group of "Little Dutchmen" so-called not because of artistic stature but because they painted small pictures of ordinary people doing everyday things. In general, these artists used light to invoke calm or humorous rather than dramatic feelings. Vermeer was exceptional in his ability to induce a serene mood through the disposition of subtly lighted planes in simplified schemes. Typical is his placement of his tiny **Lady with a Lute** between a huge, foreshortened table and an equally huge expanse of wall, broken only by a map. Sandwiched between these two rectangular shapes, the figure receives the full impact of the tension between them. The foreshortened, silhouetted edges draw the eye into the picture to the right, then the chiaroscuro directs it around the figure and back.

HONORÉ DAUMIER
The Third Class Carriage
Courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Two centuries after Rembrandt, Daumier, then more famous as a press lithographer and satirical cartoonist, painted this oil, **The Third Class Carriage,** in a style emulating both the chiaroscuro and psychological penetration he admired in the Dutch master's work. He used the play of light to reveal contrasts of character which interested him in the rude interior of the railroad car. The old woman, with her lined face and patient air, is indicated with light against shadow, while the men's heads, in more active silhouettes, are treated in reverse. Daumier, however, was not mechanically aping Rembrandt's style. The directness of his statement and composition in parallel planes both betray the thinking of his own time.

In J. M. W. Turner's dramatic 19th Century painting of the burial at sea of a historic ship, chiaroscuro is used to suggest atmosphere in a more pictorial and nebulous way than would have been attempted by the 17th Century artist. Yet his concentration of lights and darks into broad masses, and blurring of divisions between planes, had its origin in the luminous style developed two centuries before.

J. M. W. TURNER
Burial at Sea
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

Impressionism

What

Use of broken touches of color to represent scenes as glimpsed at an instant of time, with emphasis on optical effects produced by atmospheric light and movement. Forms were rendered as a series of flat patches of warm and cool color rather than modeled with light and dark. The arrangement of colors so that they blend in the eye was influenced by scientific theories but not pursued systematically.

Who

Edouard Manet (often considered the founder of the group although he left it and pursued an individual course); Claude Monet, leader and most interested in theories of the group; Camille Pissarro, Alfred Sisley, Auguste Renoir, all French; two women — Berthe Morisot, French, and Mary Cassatt, American. Edgar Degas was associated with the group but never adopted its loose, painterly style. Both he and Toulouse-Lautrec (much younger than the others) were sometimes referred to as "linear Impressionists." About fifty additional artists exhibited with the Impressionists during the years 1874 to 1886.

Where

Exhibitions were held in Paris, but Impressionists often painted in such suburban communities as Argenteuil and Pontoise and also at spots farther away, such as Fontainebleau. Le Havre and neighboring ports were early centers.

When

Roughly the two decades 1866 to 1886; taking form in the late sixties, it had developed into a pronounced style in 1874, the date of the first Impressionist exhibition. By 1886, the date of the last exhibition, the artists had taken independent directions.

Color as a revolutionary means

The Impressionists were the first artists to compose pictures in which light was expressed by color alone. Other artists, beginning with the Venetian masters of the Renaissance, and down to Constable, Turner and Corot, had explored the use of touches of color to express atmospheric light, but always subordinated it to tone. It was left for the Impressionists to substitute vibrations of color for modeling with tones. They introduced the rainbow palette, the camera snapshot type of composition and "time of day" painting. Eventually they arrived at a way of laying on the paint in broken strokes that reduced every part of the surface to similar units. It was primarily this latter method which opened the door to the development of the most extreme modern styles.

Flattening with light

The first radical step away from traditional ways of modeling forms was taken by Edouard Manet, even before Impressionism began its oudoor life, when he tried a new way of lighting forms. Instead of observing forms in the diffused light of the studio, with the customary side-directed light, Manet used a strong, frontal light on his objects and figures. By this means, the former light, middle, and dark tones were replaced by abrupt

CLAUDE MONET
La Gare Saint-Lazare
Fogg Art Museum (Maurice Wertheim Collection)

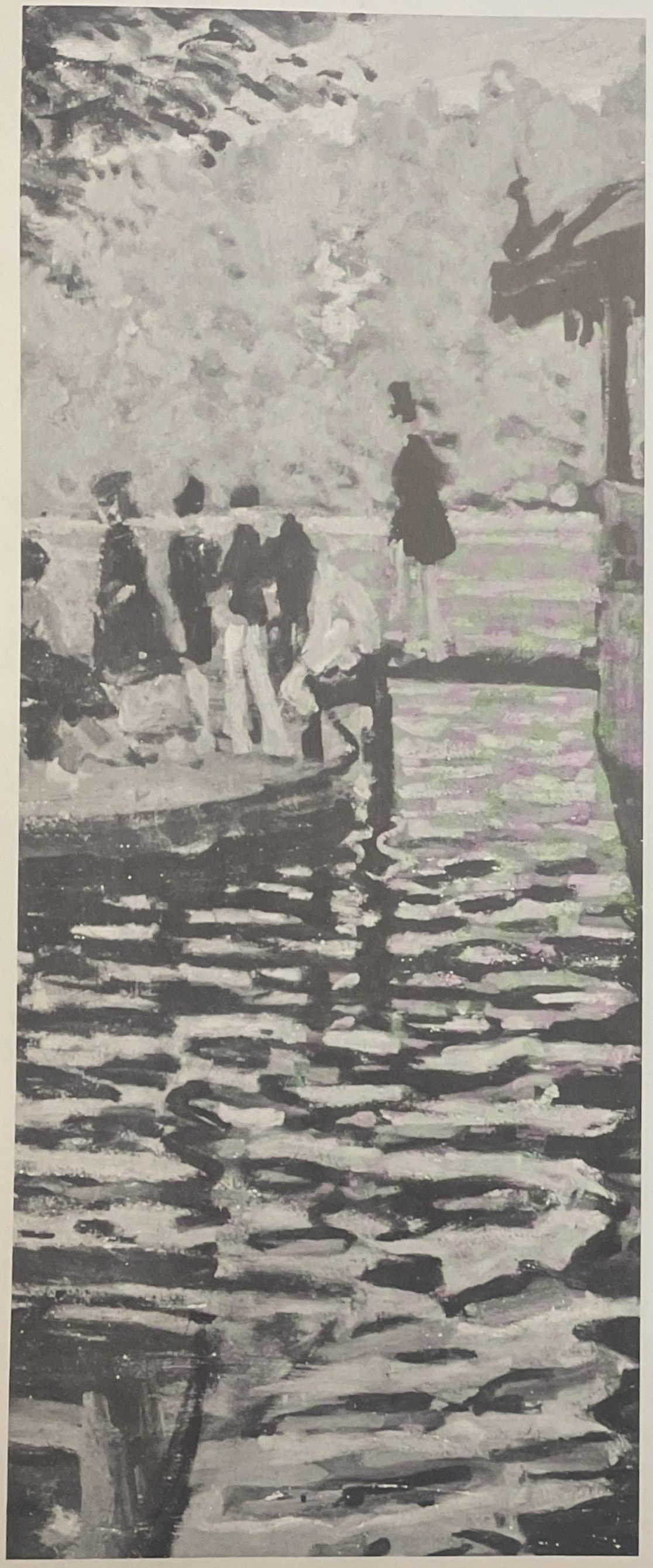
The Impressionists were the first artists in France to discover that vehicles and engines were appropriate subjects for painting. In his famous painting of the **Gare Saint-Lazare in Paris,** Monet embodied a number of qualities most enjoyed by the Impressionists: the engine as an expression of energy and motion, the unusual light resulting from the high skylight of the interior and also the contrast to the brighter exterior light and the casual presence of people in movement. Note how the many small divisions in the smoke, ceiling, partitions and foreground, create an effect approximating a grill, so that paint touches of somewhat similar size appear in nearly all parts of the surface and give it an equalized tension.

The presence of both warm and cool color in nearly every part of the picture's surface produces an effect of vibrancy as well as light: the darks of the engines are made of deep blues and reds and the brownish color of the foreground is composed of superimposed strokes of oranges and blues. The pearly tints at the top, though predominantly cool, are actually produced by lavenders and pinks juxtaposed with light blues and greens.

contrasts. Shadows were forced back toward edges, so that they became little more than outlines. What remained was flat patches of color juxtaposed in sharp contrast, rather like the pattern of shapes in a photograph.

Out-of-doors painting

It was only another step for the other Impressionists to take their paints and easels out-of-doors where the abruptly changing patterns of light and shadow now took on a new interest. This shift to the outside was all the more welcome at this time when glimpses of nature had taken on a new meaning, for this was



the period of the rapid growth of sprawling industrial centers which shut out trees and lawns. Urban dwellers increasingly found escape in strolls in parks and along tree-lined boulevards. Families on excursions into the suburbs became a favorite subject of the itinerant Impressionist painter.

Perspective from a new vantage point

Welcoming the abrupt contrasts that artists previously had avoided, the Impressionist painter now found it possible to survey his scene from a high-up vantage point in which foreground shapes were silhouetted against distant ones. This frequent choice of the "birds-eye-view" may have been influenced by the similar perspectives in the Japanese prints which were very popular with artists in Paris at this time. Probably the camera, with its shutter type of selection, also played a part. This elevated point-of-view often produced compositions with diagonal movements toward the corners and shapes casually cut off by the frame. The resulting loss of planes parallel to the picture plane was a tendency that weakened the structural strength of the picture.

Light becomes the subject

Sunlight is a great equalizer. Squinting at his subject in strong light, the Impressionist saw one whole sequence of shapes merged in warm, golden light; another part, full of diverse forms, united in the sweep of cool shadow. Things of an entirely different character were brought together into a single unity simply by the play of light. Each time of day brought different patterns of light and shadow and each type of weather unfolded new colors to the eye.

The portrayal of light reflected on water, a favorite problem of the Impressionists, plays a prominent part in Monet's typical vacation subject, **The Bathing Place.** In contrast to the vividness given the ripples in the foreground is the sketchy treatment of the picnickers on the landing.

CLAUDE MONET
The Bathing Place (La Grenouillère)
Courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art

In Renoir's **La Balancoire** dappled sunlight breaks into the solidity of the figures and feathery brushstrokes produce blurred edges and allow shapes to merge into one another and into the background.

AUGUSTE RENOIR
La Balancoire
The Louvre

EDOUARD MANET
The Soap Bubble
The Lewisohn Collection

Edouard Manet's **The Soap Bubble** shows the artist's innovation of using a light source in front of the model rather than at its side. Such a system of lighting pushes shadows back toward the edges so that they become little more than outlines. The resulting flattened areas of close tones are in contrast to the values evenly graduated from light to dark in works by old masters.

Scientific investigations of light had directed the Impressionists' attention to varying characteristics of colors when seen in changes of immediate environment. A purple viewed against a field of yellow gives a different sensation from the same color seen against a cool grey, and so on. Accordingly they noticed that within every area of sunlight or shadow there were a great variety of hues. In a white wall the sunlit part might contain pale yellows, yellow-greens and pinks; the shadowed side held not only blues but blue-greens and blue-violets. Even skies of blue or grey were not one flat color, but full of reflected lights. Since the local colors of an object varied so under different weather conditions, its permanent characteristics became less important to the artist than the way it absorbed or reflected light.

The Impressionists increasingly looked for subjects in which the vibration of light was most noticeable. Scenes near the banks of rivers where the light was broken by ripples and reflections, breeze-tossed fields where light fluctuated constantly, and moving processions of traffic and people. Monet found an ideal subject in the rounded cone of a haystack, where each tuft caught the light at a slightly different angle. He painted it dozens of times in both summer sun and winter snow. It was pictures like this, with no concern for the meaning or structure of the subject — its part in life, etc. — that caused Cézanne to comment, "Monet is only an eye," but, he added, "what an eye!"

Rainbow palette

The Impressionists devised an entirely new selection of light and bright colors in order to find equivalents for their optical sensations, but it was not so much the hues themselves, as the way they were combined, that gives their pictures a distinctive appearance. Pure hues mixed with white furnished the basic colors. Black was removed from the palette entirely and the earth colors so favored by the old masters were also banned. Dark parts of an object were usually approximated by darker blues or blues mixed with dark reds and greens.

The effect of Impressionist pictures is not one of brilliance but of a pearly luminosity. When warm and cool colors are placed near one another and viewed from a slight distance, they produce a vibrant effect, but, being complementaries, they also slightly cancel each other. The admixture with white somewhat greys the hues. The result is a sense of atmospheric haze, actually the weather quality so coveted by Monet and his friends.

It is not true, as has so often been said, that the Impressionists relied on mixture in the eye to blend all colors. If the Impressionist wanted a green tree he would not juxtapose blue and yellow dots, but he would mix variations of greens. He might add touches of the complement to simulate real-life vibrancy.

Surfaces become uniformly covered with daubs of color. Since every daub of color had come to represent a ray of light, these color units tended to become more and more uniform over the surface. The sky was composed of daubs, just as were tree tops, fields and streams of people. In each object some of its particular character of shape and local color had to be sacrificed to its appearance in light. This, therefore, represented a process of abstracting, of lifting out one consistent quality from every item in the picture – its reflection of light.

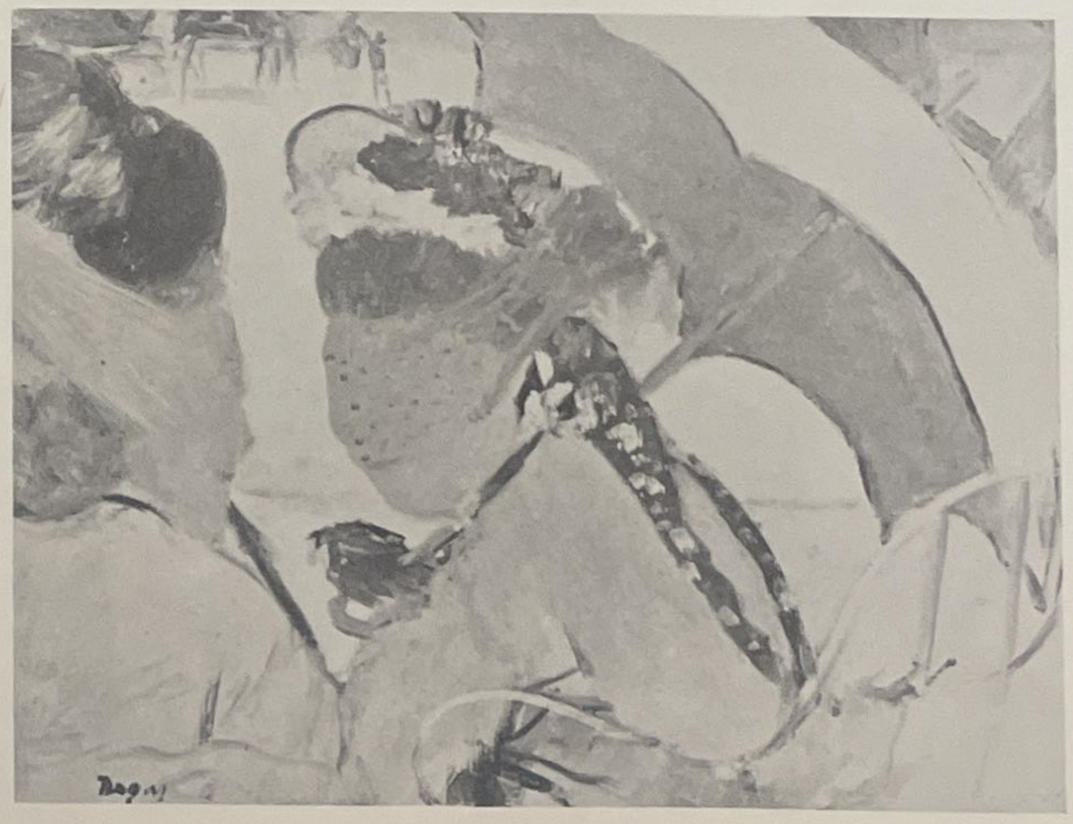
Toward abstraction

Once the Impressionist artist had reduced all elements in a scene to one kind of brush-stroke, with every part of the canvas covered by daubs standing for light rays, it was an easy step for

HENRI TOULOUSE-LAUTREC
The Englishman at the Moulin Rouge
From the Chester Dale Collection

The work of Henri Toulouse-Lautrec, a much younger man than the Impressionists, was sometimes associated with theirs during their late period. **The Englishman at the Moulin Rouge,** his print of 1892, is an example of the unusual "candid-camera" type composition which linked his methods with theirs, but it also shows how much flatter and more linear was his style.

This detail of **Ladies at the Races** shows how Degas substituted crisp silhouettes for Impressionism's blurred edges. However, other qualities he shared with the group, including his "camera snapshot" compositions, caused him to be referred to as a "linear Impressionist."



EDGAR DEGAS
Ladies at the Races
Collection Marcel Guérin, Paris

CLAUDE MONET
Les Grands Boulevards
Collection of Marshall Field

Monet's painting of the snow-covered **Les Grands Boulevards** shows both the Impressionists' interest in rendering effects of all kinds of weather and their love of things and people in movement. The casual daubs of paint in the center foreground resolve into pedestrians in a stream of traffic only when they are seen as part of the total configuration of shapes.

BERTHE MORISOT
In the Dining Room
National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
Chester Dale Collection

In the Dining Room, 1884, by Berthe Morisot, shows the loose, open brushwork and sensitivity to light-absorbing qualities of surfaces that characterized the work of this talented woman Impressionist.

other artists to substitute a different unit — Cézanne did it with planes; Seurat, with dots; Van Gogh, with ribbons of paint, and so on. Thus it was that the Impressionist who had set out to devise the most thorough-going realism, ended by pointing the way to abstraction.

The artist, amateur or professional, who sets out on a sunny day or in other interesting weather, with portable easel and colors, to find and paint a visually appealing spot, seldom realizes how unthinkable this procedure would have been regarded *before Impressionism*. The Impressionists opened our eyes to a particular kind of beauty in nature. They made possible participation in the activity of painting for a broader group of people than would ever likely have approached it had they been burdened with the formal and intellectual qualities that formerly belonged to this art. Perhaps they are the Godparents of the amateur movement — at least one part of it.

Post-Impressionism

What

A term applied to the work of four major artists who, working separately,
carried out revisions of the Impressionistic style,
so drastic as to actually reverse its objectives and methods.
Although they shared no concerted program and each developed an individual style,
their works, taken together, provide a vital link between Impressionism and 20th century styles.
All four accepted the use of light,
bright colors and also the direct, conspicuous application of paint.
All rejected the casual, camera snapshot character of Impressionism.

Who

Vincent Van Gogh, Dutch, lengthened Impressionist daubs of color
into ribbon-like strokes and outlines, in an emotional "handwriting."
He distorted shapes and colors to express intense feeling.
Paul Gauguin, French, consolidated strokes into large,
flat areas of color and outlined them with flowing curves in order to symbolize states of feeling.
Paul Cézanne, French, replaced Impressionist daubs with patches of color
which he used as building blocks to create solid forms.
Georges Seurat, French, refined daubs into dots of colors which he used
to construct simplified forms in precisely calculated compositions.

Where

All four artists worked in France. Gauguin left to continue his work in Tahiti and the Marquesas.

When

1875 to 1900.

Van Gogh

Anticipating Expressionism

In the brief decade of his mature painting, Vincent Van Gogh ushered in a kind of expression that communicated psychological rather than merely physical qualities. He used color to convey powerful states of feeling and he put down paint in rhythmic brush strokes to convey a strong sense of movement.

Van Gogh's way of working did not develop as a conscious stylization, but it grew out of his deep need to express "the heart-broken expression of our time." It resulted from the same drive that earlier in his life had led him to become a lay preacher among the impoverished miners in Belgium.

Drawing with outlines

Although we now accept the use of strong outlines in painting as well as in drawing, this method was unusual in the last century. Artists were taught that there were no lines in nature. Instead of lines they used changes of light and shadow to show edges of forms.

Even before Van Gogh had developed his unique way of using color, the Dutch artist had shown, in his drawings, qualities now considered Expressionist, especially in his emotional calligraphy.

The dictionary definition for the term calligraphy is simply "beautiful handwriting." Although in Western art handwriting and picture making have been quite separate things for many centuries, in China and Japan they have been inseparable in the artistic process. Chinese written characters are pictures, and pictures, on the other hand, are usually composed of fluid brush lines. Each involves a gesture of the hand that becomes expressive of the total character of the form. Each gesture, morever, is truly expressive to the extent that the artist is able to identify with the action and the innermost being of the form itself. Thus the artist, painting a waterfall, will let his brush mimic the plunge of the stream, and not merely copy its appearance.

Van Gogh showed, even in his earlier work, a tendency toward just such an ability to identify with his subjects. His sketches of sowers were outlined with strokes as angular and harsh as the struggle of the peasant with the soil. It was after he came to

VINCENT VAN GOGH
The Starry Night
The Museum of Modern Art, Lillie P. Bliss Bequest

In **The Starry Night** Van Gogh portrayed the intense, almost religious feelings inspired in him by the night sky, rather than the appearance of the heavens. The brush strokes on the cypress trees in the foreground suggest tongues of flame leaping upward, as well as tree branches. In the same way the whirling vortexes in the sky suggest a storm, not a meteorological one but an emotional one inside the artist. Lines like those defining the distant hills make you feel the force and impetuosity of the artist's hand.

France, however, that Van Gogh found in the popular Japanese prints the example of a linear technique that inspired him to realize more completely the powerful potentialities of his own "handwriting technique." It was then he eliminated from his shapes all accidental shadows and details and filled them with strokes that gave a textural and directional quality to the form. Outlines became merely an extension of the frenzied strokes that filled the interior of every form, until the surface appeared like a field of iron filings responding to magnetic pulls.

Where Cézanne had stressed the underlying geometrical shapes, Van Gogh emphasized those movements and contours that departed from geometry. He saw the radiating and ragged shapes in a sunflower, the potato-like lumpiness of a head rather than two spherical shapes.

Perspective exaggerated

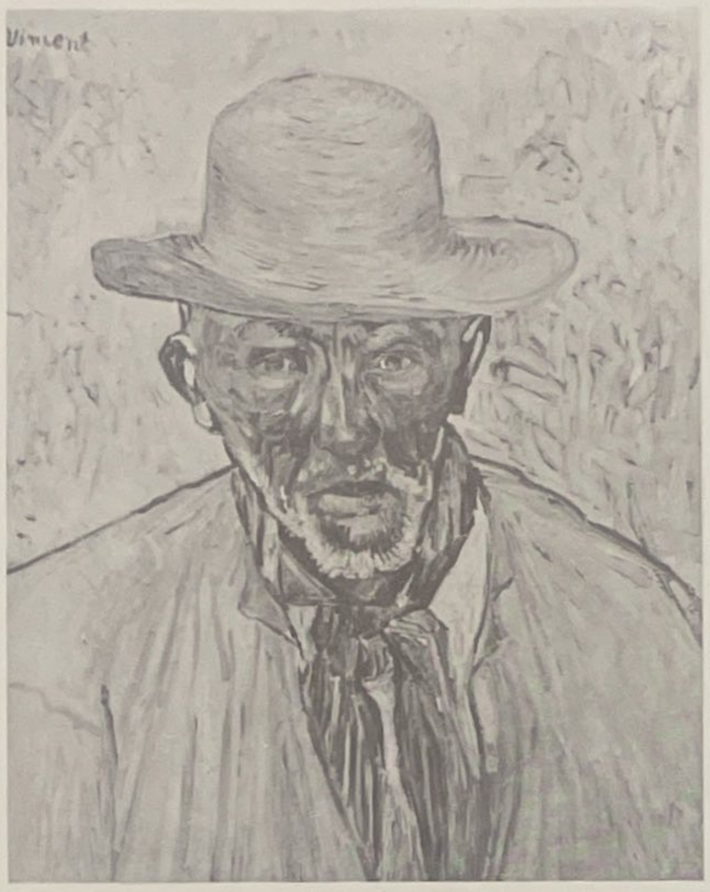
Perspective became for Van Gogh an emotionally expressive rather than a merely descriptive means. Cézanne had subordinated the flow of lines into the depth of the picture, but Van Gogh hurried up the pace of the recession. His roads and furrows in fields plunge back, not in trim, geometrical fashion but in broken sequences.

Colors in large areas

The Impressionists' palette of pure colors and their interest in complementary colors opened up vast new possibilities in Van Gogh's art, after he came to France. He found the principle of opposites, or complementaries, a way of thinking about color that suited him temperamentally, since he had always wanted to express life in simple opposing forces. He could not bear, though, to disperse the strength of his colors by breaking them down into little warm and cool dots.

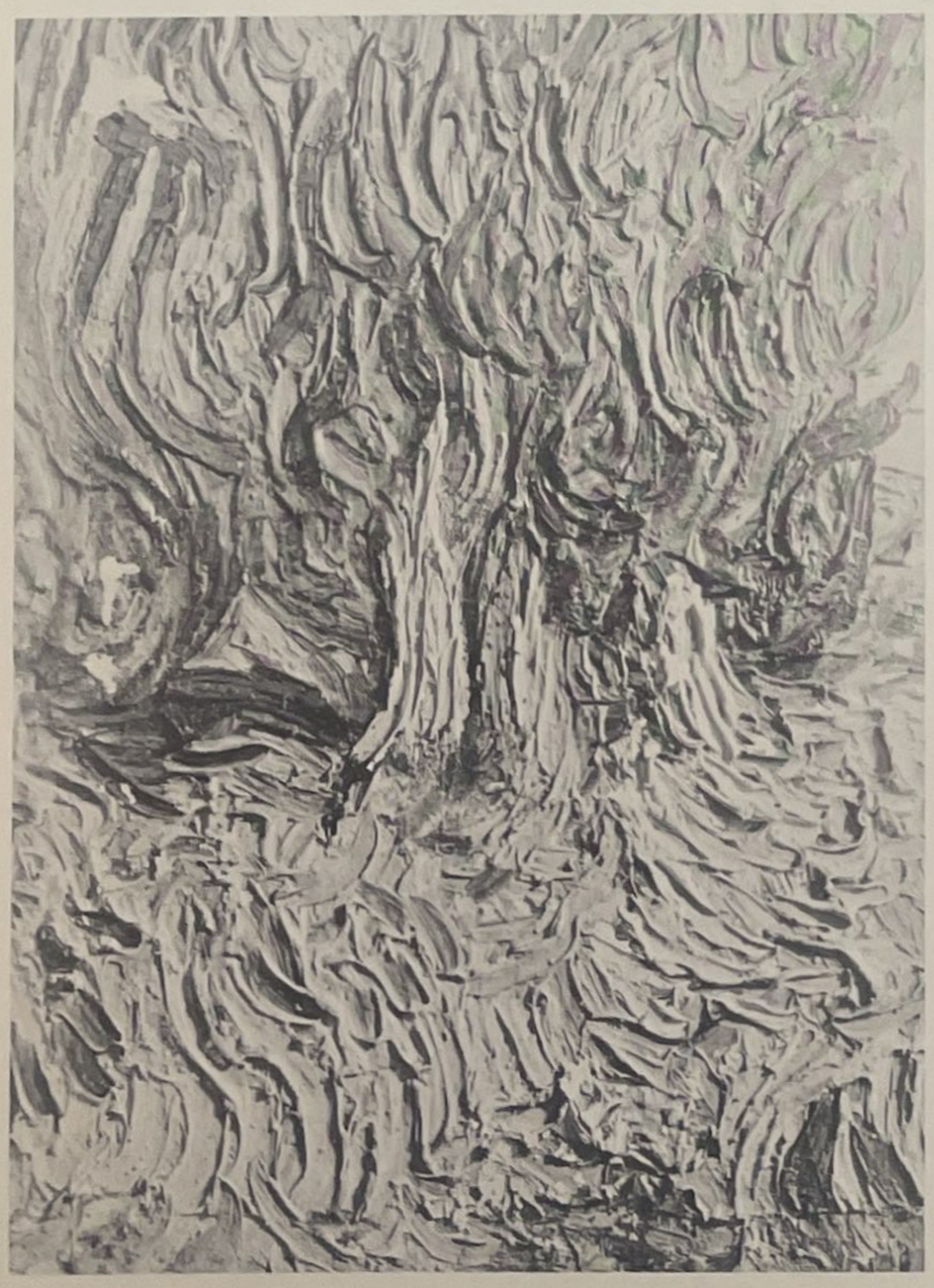
He found his personal solution to the use of color in the south of France, where, under the blazing sun, things took on just the strong, large contrasts that he wanted. Painting wheat fields under the summer sky, he no longer reduced them to minute color variations. Rather he tried to find equivalents for his sensation of the clash of warms and cools. Van Gogh painted

VINCENT VAN GOGH
Old Peasant of Camarque
Collection of Mrs. H. Harris Jonas



In painting this head of a peasant about 1888, Van Gogh concentrated on the furrowed lines of the face, making his strokes circle hypnotically around the eyes. The simplified smock and the straw hat with its straight brim provides a foil for this movement, while the vigorously stroked background sustains the intensity of the picture's mood.

Detail from a tree trunk in one of Van Gogh's paintings shows his paint applied in a heavy impasto and ribbon-like strokes often made with a palette knife.



the sky much bluer than it was, and the field in yellows and oranges much higher in key than the grain itself. He found that he could, nevertheless, keep the illusion of reality if every color were raised in intensity to the same degree. He was finding equivalents for the amount of contrast he felt in nature, rather than matching its hues.

Colors are symbolic

Van Gogh felt the oppositions of both colors and movements as symbolic of human emotions. Speaking of his *Night Cafe* he said he had "tried to express the terrible passions of humanity . . . everywhere there is a clash and contrast of the most alien reds and greens, in the figures of the sleeping hooligans, in the empty, dreary rooms, in violet and blue."

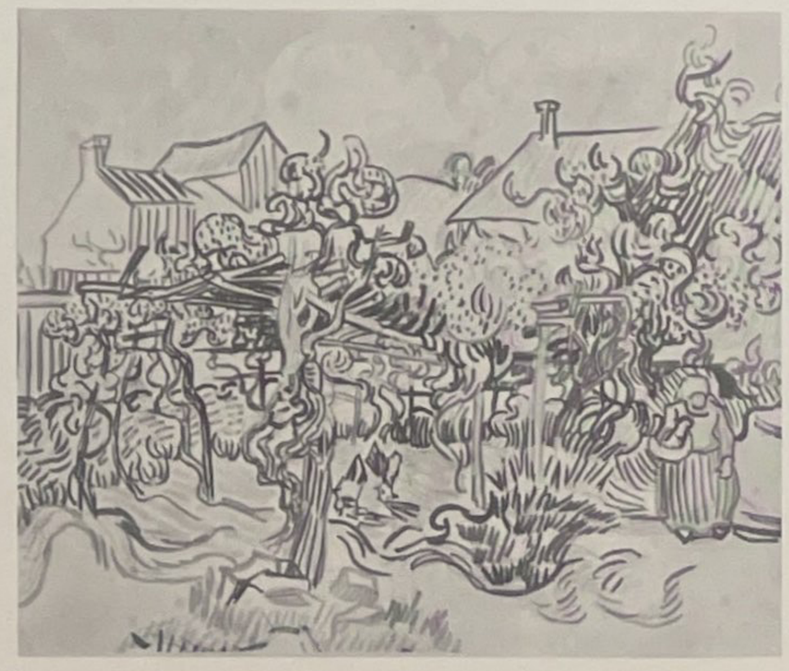
Painting with the palette knife

In his passion to make his symbolic color-shapes as real and intense as possible, Van Gogh felt the need to put the pigment on in thick impasto. He often squeezed the paint directly out of the tube and then modeled it with his palette knife. This method left deep furrows at the edges which showed the motion

In his drawing of **Fishermen's Houses at Saintes-Maries,** 1889, Van Gogh used his typical exaggerated perspective of lines plunging into the depth in broken sequences.

VINCENT VAN GOGH
Fishermen's Houses at Saintes-Maries
Collection of Vincent W. Van Gogh of Laren, Holland

VINCENT VAN GOGH
Garden and Cottages
Collection of Vincent W. Van Gogh of Laren, Holland



Van Gogh's sketch of **Garden and Cottages** near Auvers, 1890, shows his characteristic twisting brushstroke in the clouds, foliage, and furrows of earth.

Van Gogh's **Night Café**, 1888, is an example of his symbolic use of color. In it the artist said he had "tried to express the terrible passions of humanity by means of red and green . . . everywhere there is a clash and contrast of the most alien reds and greens, in the figures of the little sleeping hooligans, in the empty, dreary room, in violet and blue."

VINCENT VAN GOGH
Night Café
Collection of Mr. Stephen C. Clark

and direction of the stroke. Even the legs of a chair seemed to become conveyors of energy.

Illness

Van Gogh was the victim of a serious nervous illness that finally drove him to take his life when he was thirty-three years old. But, since for years Van Gogh's art had provided the necessary balance to his conflicting impulses, we can assume that his painting was created out of the healthier part of his personality.

Interior and exterior reality

Van Gogh's example restored to painting its role as a means of expressing human emotions, not through its story content, but directly, by contrasts of line and color. His work revealed that the act of painting can be so intense and deeply felt as to be almost religious. Although few artists will ever approach Van Gogh's artistic passion, no one who has responded to his paintings can ever again regard making pictures as exclusively a means of reproducing outward appearances.

It is one of the remarkable truths of painting that great artists like Van Gogh, who bring to us the realities of their own emotional world, finally persuade us that these are the realities of the external world. Thus many of the thousands of Americans who have hung in their homes reproductions of Van Gogh's paintings come to see sunflowers, cypress trees and starry skies much as Van Gogh saw them.

Gauguin

Faraway and exotic arts

Paul Gauguin, originally an amateur painter, was driven to abandon a prosperous business career and devote himself to creating a new kind of art, by a strong need to protest against what he regarded as the superficiality and ugliness of European civilization. Searching for a means of expression that would reach beyond the surface layers of sophistication and custom and reveal the constant and deep emotions, he turned to the arts of faraway and ancient peoples. Their rhythms, stylizations and decorative ways of using color entered into his own style. Above all their example of forms, used to symbolize rather than describe, affected him and became the basis of his method, which he called Synthetism. Gauguin advised his followers, "Have always before you the Persians, the Cambodians and a little of the Egyptians. The error is the Greek, however beautiful it may be." Although Gauguin has been mainly publicized for his sojourn in the South Seas, he would probably have arrived at much the same style of painting if he had never budged from Paris. Pictures that he did in Brittany five years before he left for Tahiti, show how deeply he had absorbed the lessons available for all to see in the museums.

Flat and decorative color

Gauguin's work with the Impressionistic painter, Pissarro, had taught him to remove from his palette the greyed tones and had also trained him to think in terms of complementary contrasts. It was not a very long step from Manet's forms, flattened by a flooding light, to the use of flat areas of color for their own sake. Gauguin eliminated both the former's directed light and also the atmospheric light of the other Impressionists. He restored to his palette the black and the earth colors they had banned, but he used these in bold contrasts to bright pinks, oranges and greens, never to dull them. He discovered that without any atmospheric blurring he could make colors suggest a limited amount of depth by controlling their intensity and placement.

Heightened color

Gauguin asserted that the brightness of a color depended on the amount of it. He said, "How does a tree look to you? Green? All right then. Use green, the greenest green on your palette. And that shadow a little bluish. Don't be afraid. Paint it as blue as you can." He added, "a meter of green is greener than a centimeter of green."

Distorting shapes

Gauguin used not only an obvious painted outline to separate shapes, but he also insisted on his right to change the shapes themselves. In order to fit forms into the flowing curves that he preferred (as being organic, and hence closer to nature), and also to stress vital rhythms (like those of primitive arts), he found it necessary to modify and even invent shapes. He vehemently asserted the artist's right to depart from nature: "Why not stress even to the point of deformation the curve of a beautiful shoulder or conventionalize the symmetry of a bough unmoved by breath of air?"

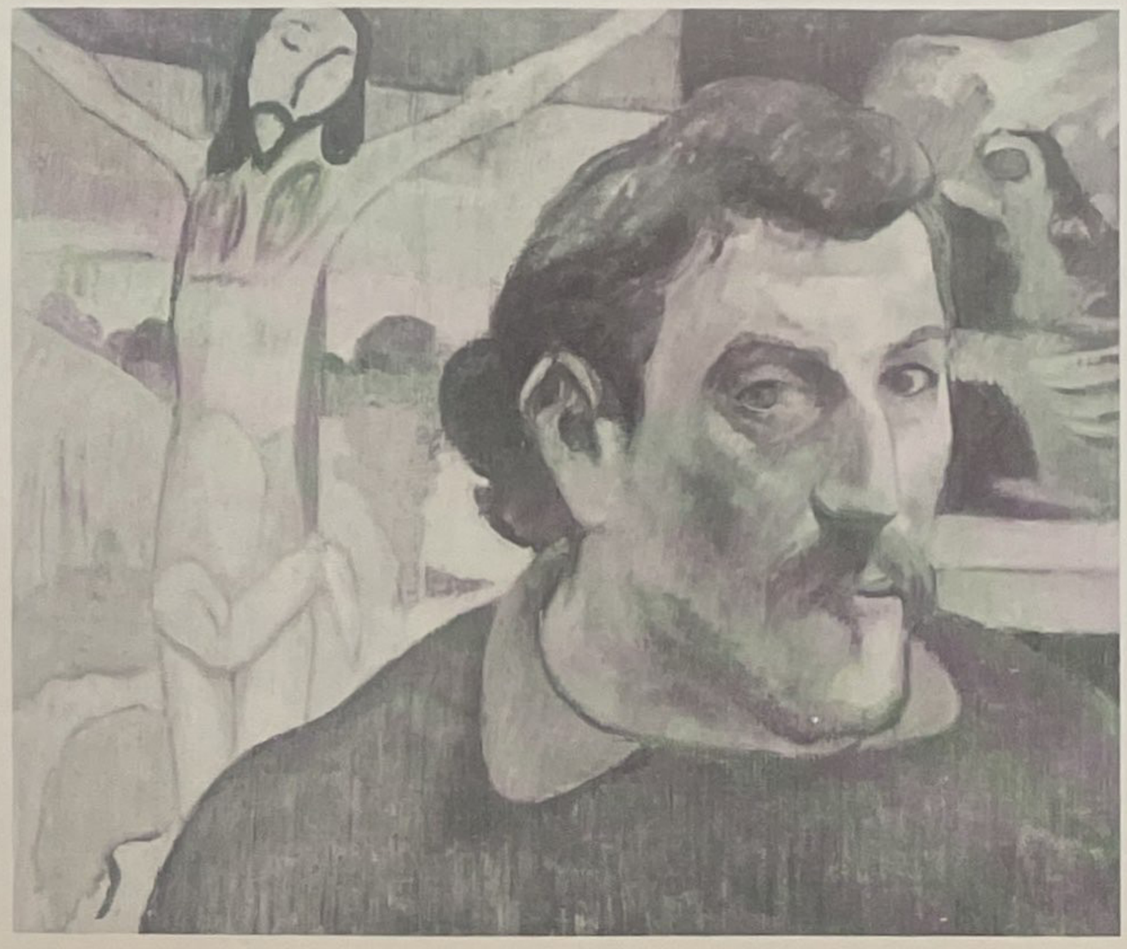
Conspicuous surfaces

The decorative quality of Gauguin's work comes from his handling of the paint on canvas as well as from his broad areas of flat color and his flowing outlines. At some periods, especially after his trip to Tahiti, Gauguin used a rough, coarsely woven canvas, which seemed suitable to his subjects from primitive life and his rejection of the polish of civilization. Earlier he had applied paint so that it took on a precious enamel-like quality.

His influence

Gauguin's artistic legacy fell to both the Fauves and Expressionists. The former took over his large areas of color used for decorative effect and they profited from his ability to build flat color areas into a design having limited space. The latter responded to the stark deformations in his painting.

Even before he went to Tahiti, Gauguin was attracted by primitive arts and by folk arts that have a primitive vigor. In this **Self-portrait,** he has placed to the left a crude carving of a crucifixion like those of wayside shrines in Brittany where he had been living and painting. At the right he placed a primitive mask like those he had studied in the museum.



PAUL GAUGUIN
Self-Portrait
Collection of Maurice Denis, Paris

Spirit of the Dead Watching, which Gauguin painted while in Tahiti, represents a girl terror-stricken by the imagined presence of a supernatural being. Gauguin deliberately used the word "musical" in analyzing the picture as follows: "undulating horizontal lines, harmonies of orange and blue woven together with yellows and violets and lightened by greenish sparkles."

Although the figure is slightly modeled in arbitrarily changing patterns, the main contrast is reserved for the large silhouette of the figure against the couch. The strong horizontal movement is sustained by the pattern at the bottom and countered by the vertical figure and post. Light splashes in the background return interest to the surface and accentuate an over-all rhythm.

PAUL GAUGUIN
Spirit of the Dead Watching
Collection of A. Conger Goodyear

Seurat

"By method alone"

If we think of the stream of modern art as dividing with the Post-Impressionists into two opposing streams, Seurat belongs on the structural and analytical side along with Cézanne, and is even farther removed from the emotional direction of Van Gogh and Gauguin. He said, "I paint by method alone with no other consideration." During his brief lifetime Seurat was chiefly known for his method of Pointillism, a system of painting with dots of color. Today he is esteemed for his contribution to revitalizing an art of structure.

His aim was an art as impersonal and formalized as that of the Byzantine artists who, in the Middle Ages, carried out vast wall decorations according to codified rules. But the spirit in which he formulated his own principles was also partly scientific, for he weighed every element of line and color as carefully as a scientist measuring ingredients for a formula.

Harmonies of line and color

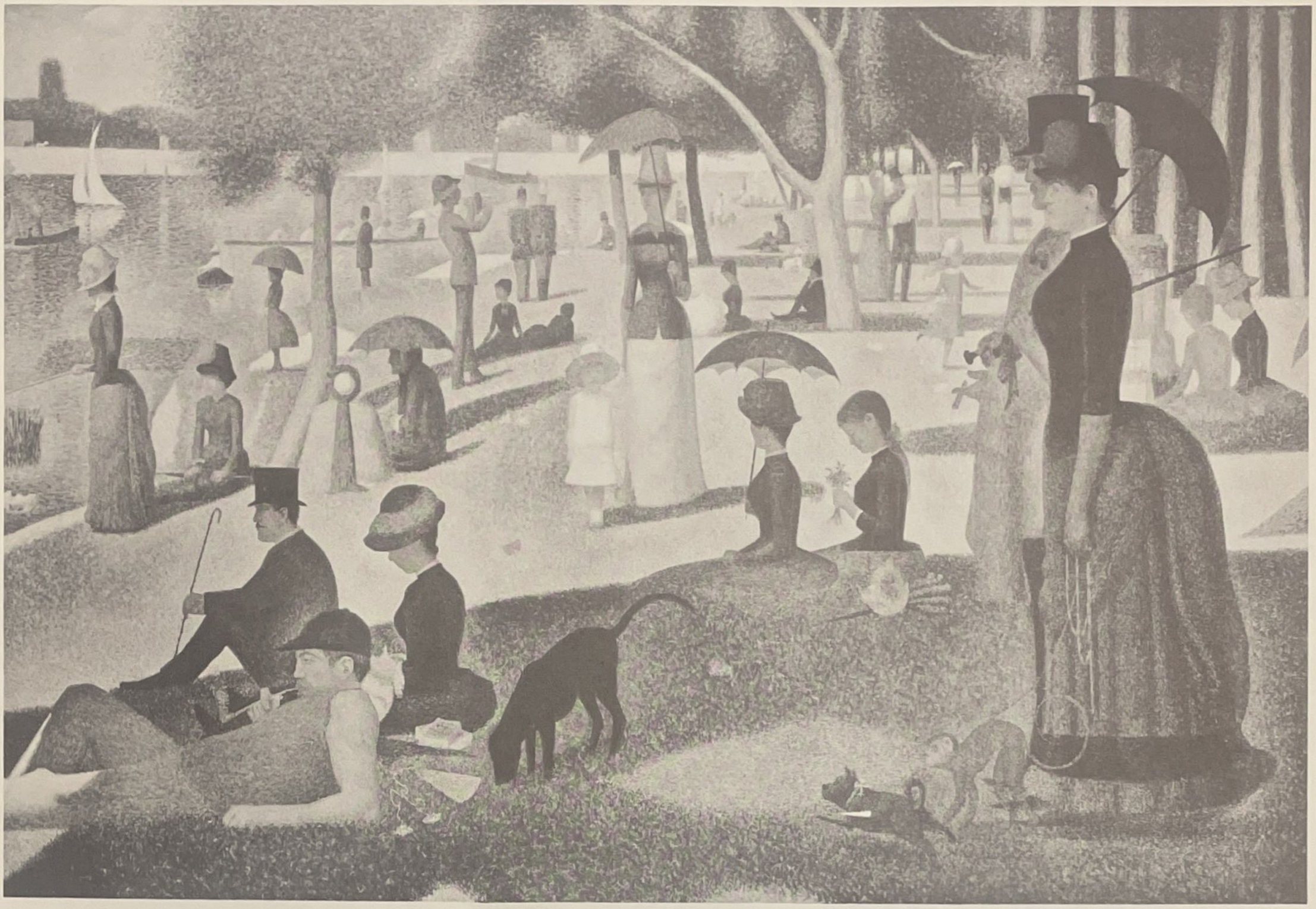
Seurat's method involved long preparatory periods of making studies and sketches on the spot, then in the studio transposing to a large final canvas in which all parts of the picture were brought into a precise control. Creating the illusion of depth in a picture, a process that Seurat called "hollowing out the canvas," involved simultaneous plotting of line relationships and color intensities. Most of Seurat's forms are reduced to the shapes of cylinders in rather mechanized parts (Leger was to develop this idea in the 20th century). Often several silhouetted figures form a frontal plane and the eye is led past them to succeeding planes in which other figures appear as space markers that circulate the eye back and forth in a well defined orbit. Although Seurat's schemes do not violate perspective, recession is actually accomplished by placement and diminishing sizes in planes parallel to the picture plane.

Divisionism

The final canvas was filled in with color dots one section at a time, in a process that sometimes lasted years. So exact was Seurat's formula for combinations of color dots that he had no difficulty working by gas light. His palette consisted of four colors determined on basic hues by the experiments with light of the scientist Chevreul. Blue, red, yellow and green and their intermediates — blue-green, yellow-green, etc., were mixed with white but not with each other. These were set down in dots in which warm and cool were generally juxtaposed so that in blending in the eye they conveyed a convincing illusion of

GEORGES SEURAT
Le Chahut
Courtesy of the Albright Art Gallery, Buffalo, N.Y.

This detail from a study for **Le Chahut,** shows the tiny superimposed dots of warm and cool color Seurat used to create planes which advance or recede in exactly controlled relationships.



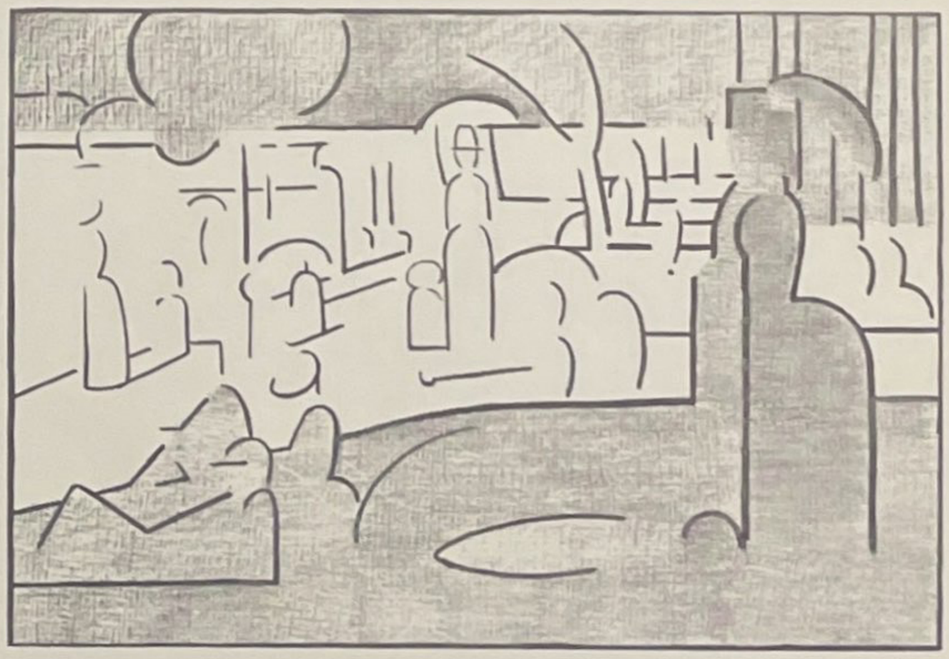
GEORGES SEURAT
Sunday on Grande Jatte Island
Courtesy of The Art Institute of Chicago

In La Grande Jatte, Seurat took a characteristic Impressionist "vacation" subject and turned it to an opposite expression of a frozen and immobile panorama. Foreground figures form a frontal plane and, in the distance, the foliage of trees acts as a backdrop. Between these two, numerous figures and forms, mostly cylindrical, are made to recede through diminishing sizes and calculated placement. A rhythmic sequence of vertical figures and tree trunks is countered by horizontal and diagonal shadows which tend to converge near the center pair of figures.

depth. The color specks were set down with such an impersonal touch that this method has been compared to the superimposed dots of the four-color printing process.

Abstract qualities

It was Seurat's ability to abstract lines and colors from nature and then create from them forms of simple monumentality that won for him his present importance in our modern tradition of art. His work was not fully appreciated until after Cubism, when attention was directed back to the pre-classical arts of the Egyptians and to Byzantine mosaics. Then it was seen that Seurat had taken the casual panorama of life in his time and fixed it in forms of enduring significance, forms comparable in grandeur to those of ancient artists.



Cézanne

Father of the moderns

Paul Cézanne's contribution to later painting was the major one leading in the direction of structure. Out of his need to bring together two apparently opposing sets of qualities in painting, one derived from the Impressionists, the other from the old masters, he worked out a revolutionary way of painting that made the gruff little Frenchman of Aix the father of modern painting.

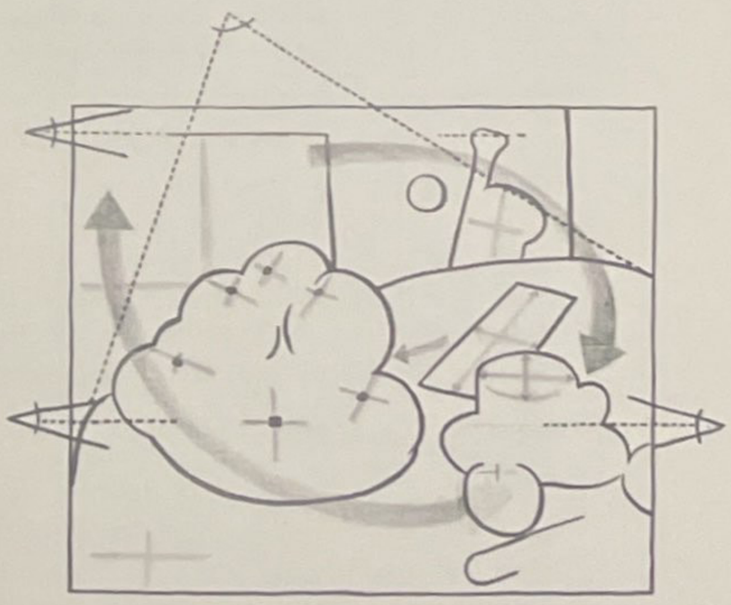
Building blocks of color

Cézanne used the warm and cool, tan and blue colors of the Impressionists as building blocks with which to create forms that appeared solid and massive where theirs had seemed flimsy and "of the moment." Pissarro, his teacher in the Impressionist method, had taught him to see nature in bright, outdoor colors and blue shadows. Cézanne, however, could not accept the Impressionist way of ignoring the solidity of forms in order to enhance the charm of their light-reflecting surfaces.

Volumes

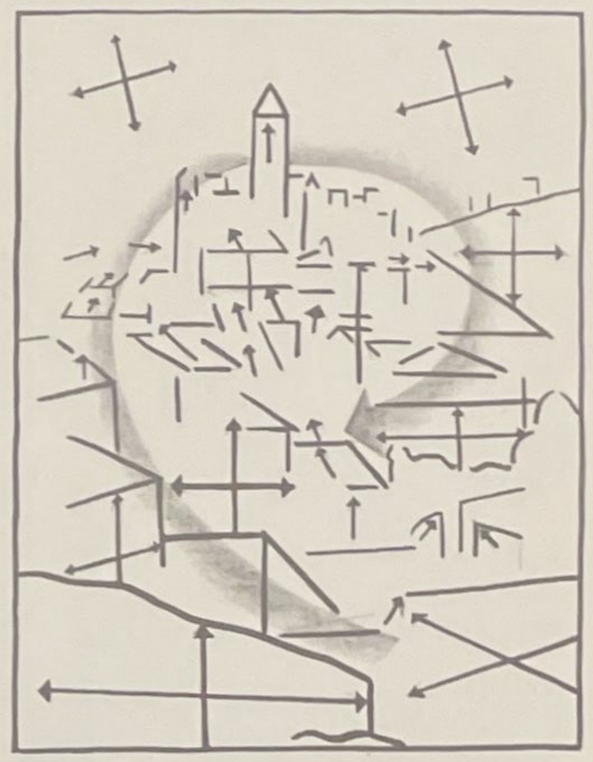
In Cézanne the sense of volumes in nature was very highly developed. Mont Sainte Victoire, which he could see near his home in Aix, filled him with awe, as he felt its solid masses extending in all directions. He was intensely aware even of its sides which he could not see from a particular spot where he had set up his easel, and he wanted to express that fullness of form. He was less interested in the details of houses, fields and trees on

Cézanne's still life shows how such simple forms as apples and a cup and saucer can appear monumental when their relationships to each other and to the surrounding space are felt and expressed. Here an expanding action travels from the fruit dish upwards to the fireplace at the left and then across to the tongs whose tipping axis returns the movement to the surface. Although the dish disappears at the right, apples are held in place by the supporting leftward thrust of the card.



PAUL CÉZANNE
Les Grosses Pommes
Collection of Jacob Goldschmidt, Berlin

PAUL CÉZANNE
Gardanne
F. H. Hirschland Collection



Cézanne's painting of the town of **Gardanne** shows elements in his late style that anticipated Cubism. The presence of the two-dimensional surface of the picture is emphasized by his rendering of buildings and hillside in card-like, angular planes piled up vertically in slightly overlapping sequences. The picture plane is also stressed by areas of bare canvas that appear in the background—in the sketchily painted sky and unfilled-in hilltops — and also in the foreground. The partially open edges of buildings channel space in upward and rotating movements.

either mountain or plain than in the big simple contrast of form between the two. He felt that there must be a way of expressing this difference in bulk and yet at the same time retaining a sense of their underneath unity. He set himself the problem of portraying these structural qualities, not with values as had the old masters, but with color alone.

Color modulation

The term modeling refers to change in values. A new word was needed to distinguish the form-defining changes in color that Cézanne envisioned. He decided that it should be *modulation*. The substitution of modulation in color in place of modeling in values was the keystone of the method that Cézanne worked out after years of experiment. Everything, he found, could be considered in terms of its volumes. Even the foliage of a tree could be translated into patches of color that describe its generally round shape, with light warm colors predominant on one side, cool blue-greens and blues on the other. He was using these patches of warm and cool color as if they were bricks, to build solid walls, even in the soft foliage of a tree.

Uniform surface

As Cézanne built up the sides of a tree, he did not stop at the edge but kept right on building out into the sky with his varied blocks of color. His skies became as solid as his trees and houses. Often it was hard to tell exactly where the cool, shadowed side of a tree left off and the blue color of the sky began.

The background became just as important as the foreground. In fact, it was difficult to say which was which, since every shape became a background for another shape.

Up and across the surface

Cézanne had discovered that by tilting upward (in the painting) the tops of tables and other flat surfaces, and slightly overlapping shapes, he could show that things were back of one another in depth. He found, too, that by emphasizing the forward or

PAUL CÉZANNE
Woods with Millstone
Collection of Carroll S. Tyson

Detail of **Woods with Millstone** shows angular patches of color used to build landscape into forms resembling architecture. Tree trunks become elongated cylinders; rocks are made up of rectangular planes set at varying axes. Note how patches of the similar tone (and color) move from the shadowed side of the rock to the bank beyond and then to tree foliage.

backward, right or left tilt of a form, whether a house or an apple, it would appear active. The effect is not that the apple is in motion, but that it and every other form in the picture is exerting pressure on the surfaces adjoining. The weight of a bowl pushes down; the creased folds of a tablecloth stretch across; a bottle climbs up the surface. The effect of stressing the angle or axis of each form is to set up diagonal movements in the picture which do not converge toward a vanishing point.

Contradictory perspectives

Perspective is a very useful device for recording the appearances of things when seen from the viewpoint of one individual pair of eyes stationed at a particular vantage point. Cézanne, however, was not interested in optical appearances but in underlying structures. Since he wanted to express a view of the world that was not limited by what one person can see at one moment, a world as vast and complex as science now knew our world to be, he had to modify perspective. His solution was to extend the amount of space perceived at one time, so that a picture combined views often taken from the extreme left and right as well as center. This was not a matter of trying to show all sides of every object, as has so often been stated, but of showing those sides of objects which would fill out and define the space of the over-all picture.

Cézanne's method, realized over years of exhausting trial and error, was the product of a logical, step by step development. In the end he was led to a style that recreated nature to a much greater extent than he had at first intended.

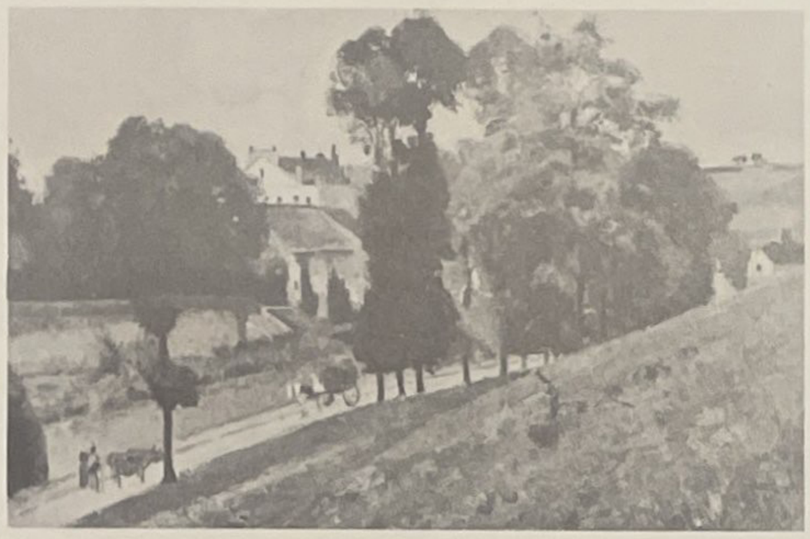
The heritage of Cézanne

When Cézanne died in 1906 he had changed the way most of us see our world. There is hardly an artist who has not been affected by Cézanne's thinking, even if he did not adopt it. Thousands of people who have never seen a picture by Cézanne have become familiar with his way of seeing nature at third or fourth hand, through artists who have been influenced by the master from Aix.

Cézanne was never able to put into words his philosophy, but he expressed it very well in his pictures. Their message to us (in part) is this: everything in the world about us is important, not as a separate thing but as a part of a larger whole. In this sense an apple can have as much dignity as a great dome; a bottle as a tower. When these objects become a part of the complete life of a picture they stand for a kind of order, changing yet enduring, that exists in life as well as in art.

PAUL CÉZANNE
The Hermitage at Pontoise
Courtesy of John Rewald

CAMILLE PISSARRO
The Hermitage at Pontoise
Courtesy of John Rewald



A comparison of paintings by Cézanne and Pissarro of **The Hermitage at Pontoise**: Cézanne has reduced and flattened the foreground field and brought the rectangular buildings closer to the foreground. They gain in importance by the ascending trees that frame them and by the approach from the road and wall which provides a series of ascending, open planes. The entire vertical-horizontal structure blocks off the effects of perspective recession and returns the eye to the picture-plane. Pissarro's composition is more camera-like, with sizes and shapes determined by perspective and accident.

PAUL CÉZANNE
Mont Sainte Victoire
George W. Elkins Collection, Philadelphia Museum of Art

Near the end of his life Cézanne painted this exceptionally emotional interpretation of the mountain that he had painted so many times before. To his usual strong emphasis on its many sided volumes rising above the plain he added a powerful twisting movement of line. Beginning in the foreground rooftops, linear edges break loose from solid planes and set up a dynamic path of movement that carries the eye around and back of the mountain and into the sky.

In **The Card Players,** 1892, Cézanne's thoughtful peasants convey an impression of permanence and immobility, an effect heightened by the nearly symmetrical composition. As usual, the background blocks off recession, forcing the eye back to the picture plane. This forward-thrusting action is supported by the perspective lines of the table cloth which spread out flatly in the foreground, forming the base of a pyramid (capped by the bottle's cork). Against this regularity, Cézanne played such asymmetrical elements as the reverse curves of the two hat brims and the wall moldings at the right.

PAUL CÉZANNE
The Card Players
The Louvre

*

Expressionism

What

The use of distortion to express emotion. Subjects from life or fantasy are often of a violent or extreme character, generally rendered with slashing strokes or doodle-like lines. Paint is applied with brush or palette knife in a conspicuous "handwriting." Color is used to express emotion rather than to describe reality. The vital and expressive is valued above that which is beautiful to the eye.

Who

Originated with two main German groups plus a few other Europeans. The first group, called *The Bridge,* included Ludwig Kirschner, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, Ernst Heckel, Emil Nolde and Max Pechstein. Käthe Kollwitz, George Grosz and Max Beckmann were early Expressionists outside this group, as was also Oskar Kokoschka (Austrian). A later group, called *The Blue Riders,* was formed by Franz Marc, Wassily Kandinsky (Russian) and Paul Klee (Swiss). Prominent Expressionists working outside Germany in the post-war period were: Chaim Soutine (Lithuanian), Marc Chagall (Russian) and Georges Rouault (French), all working in France.

Where

In Germany with the participation of artists from Austria, Russia, Switzerland and other European countries. Later the movement spread throughout Europe and to America, especially when prominent Expressionists like Beckmann and Grosz fled Nazi Germany and came to the United States.

When

Earliest group, *The Bridge,* formed in 1906; *The Blue Rider* group, in 1912. Expressionism reached a climax in Germany about the period of the First World War but has had sporadic revivals as well as a sustained influence ever since.

Distrust of the exterior world

The Expressionist artist was driven to create a new kind of art by his urge to probe under the surfaces of things. He no longer trusted the physical realities of the world around him. Under the surface of cities like Berlin and Munich, the artist sensed tensions that would soon explode into war. In the outwardly composed faces of people he detected the passions unknown even to themselves which were being studied in the new science of psychoanalysis.

NOTE: There were so many different artists who took part in the development of Expressionism, that it has been found necessary, in order to describe the Expressionist method of painting, to invent a composite Expressionist. The pictures reproduced on these pages will demonstrate how different the styles of all the participating artists actually were.

Empathy

The dictionary definition of the term, empathy, is: "mental entering into the feeling or spirit of a person or thing; motor mimicry." This quality played an important part in the portraits in which Expressionism first became defined. In order to reveal psychological states of feeling, suppressed longings, hypocrisies, lusts and fears, the artist had to identify with what he painted, actually to "feel into" the subject's spiritual being. He would exaggerate the size of eyes, the single most revealing feature of the face, and concentrate on character-revealing lines at the expense of the solidity and bulk of a head. The sunken

GEORGES ROUAULT
Christ Mocked by Soldiers
The Museum of Modern Art

Christ Mocked by Soldiers, 1932, shows the intense, symbolic portrayal of religious subjects that characterized the work of the French master, Georges Rouault, who, though he once exhibited with the Fauves, is usually considered an Expressionist. The rich color and surface of such canvases results from his unique method of piling up numerous layers of paint, one on top of the other, and subsequently scraping through to varying depths with his palette knife. The heavy black lines which separate various areas resemble those of stained glass windows which Rouault had been employed to repair as a young man.

hollow of a cheek or the aggressive jut of a jaw had to be felt as if they were a part of his own nerves and muscles.

Portraits of cities (Kokoschka) and even of ordinary objects involved a similar process of identification. "Feeling into" in terms of a city meant accentuating its characteristic shapes of jagged rooftops or overpowering domes and towers, heightening its contrasts of great and small, and using many flickering accents of color, set off by strong lights and darks.

Paint surface and handwriting

Working in the heat of emotion, usually dealing with subjects that involved extreme and violent states of feeling, the artist tended to put down the strokes of paint with vehemence. Much as a person writing a letter in an agitated state will bear down

KÄTHE KOLLWITZ
Death Reaches for a Child
Courtesy of Henry Regnery

In **Death Reaches for a Child,** 1924-35, a famous lithograph by Käthe Kollwitz, a direct and forceful use of the crayon, drastic simplification of forms and portrayal of violent states of feeling characteristically link her style with that of the German Expressionists. However this woman, who is known for her heroic life as well as for her work, developed quite independently her moving portrayals of the misery of Germany's impoverished masses.

Composition 7, Fragment 1, 1913, by Kandinsky, is an example of the Expressionist idiom carried into complete abstraction. Free shapes of color and agitated lines are brushed in with the utmost spontaneity in explosive configurations. The characteristic concentric and jagged motifs which appear frequently in his work of this period, were derived from his earlier, representational pictures and retain the quality of his personal style even when produced, as here, by a semi-automatic process. Kandinsky wanted his pictures to be considered "as a graphic representation of mood and not as a representation of objects."

WASSILY KANDINSKY
Composition 7, Fragment 1
The Museum of Modern Art, Lillie P. Bliss Bequest

OCEANIA
Bird Man
Collection of Washington University, St. Louis

Bird-Man, a 47-inch high wood carving from Oceania, is a typical example of the grotesque primitive works which interested Expressionist artists because they expressed extreme states of feeling. Most such carvings and masks were designed for use in magical rituals and were inspired by a desire to mimic and control supernatural forces.

hard on the pen, jabbing at the paper and stressing crossings on letters, the Expressionist applied paint with force, and often used the palette knife instead of brushes for more direct effect. Since hardly an inch of canvas remained smooth and unbroken, an effect was created of a rhythmically pulsating surface. Georges Rouault, the French Expressionist, developed an especially rich and exciting surface by piling up successive coats of different colors and later partially scraping them away with the palette knife to expose contrasting touches of underneath layers.

Distortion and primitive art

The Expressionist was obliged to depart from outward appearance of things, not, like the Cubist, to strengthen structure in his own picture, but to convey an inner reality — actually his own feelings. He found examples of expressive distortion in the works of Van Gogh, Gauguin and the Norwegian, Munch. He also discovered qualities similar to those he was developing in his own work, in the arts of primitive people, so well represented in German museums.

The Expressionists, having already thought of people's faces as masks, concealing hidden purposes and feelings, were deeply affected by the ceremonial masks from the Pacific Islands, which had as their only purpose to objectify extreme and frightening emotions. By his belief in sympathetic magic the primitive tribesman, making a mask to compel spirits to do his bidding, had produced distortions expressive to a degree unknown in Western art. The primitive artist "feels into" the lines and shapes of his mask because he believes he is actually operating on powerful forces. He mimics the qualities of the imagined spirit by the stroke that he paints or carves in wood. The whorls and zig-zags which are so prominent in this art were adapted by the Expressionists to their own expression. Grotesque images became important in the work of the Germans, especially Nolde and Pechstein, who actually voyaged to the South Seas.

Movement

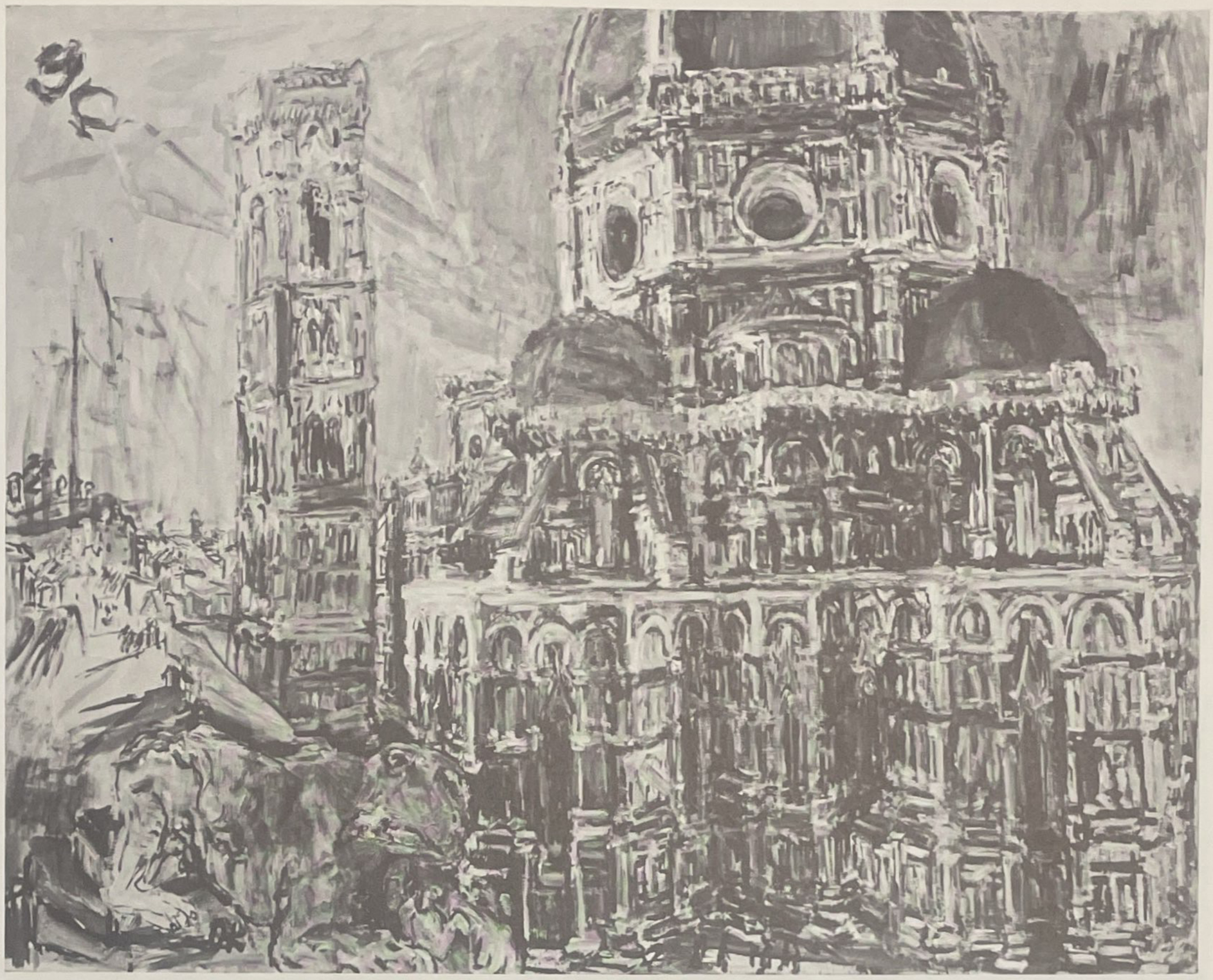
The more the artist stressed outlines of objects and parts of objects, the less solid and substantial they became. Patterns of windows in a building or folds in clothing would jump out, tending to break the limits of the confining shape, and forms became increasingly loose-jointed. A line leaning to the left would have to be countered by a line leaning to the right. Soon the whole surface was made up of lines of movement, each one showing the artist's nervous handwriting.

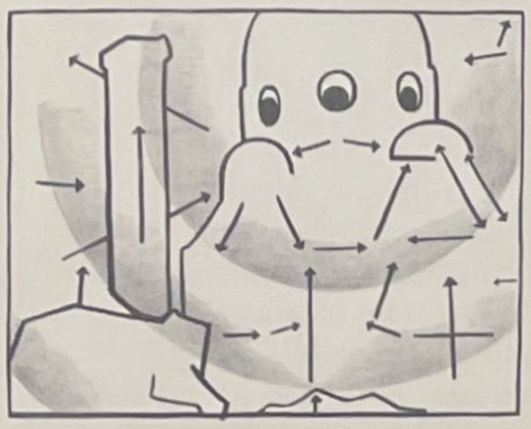
Spontaneity

Although the artist worked with the utmost spontaneity, setting things down while the sensation was vivid, and with a minimum of working over, it must be remembered that the Expressionist often made a number of different versions of the same subject before he struck one that satisfied him. He rejected the kind of exhausting discipline that made the Cubist labor for long periods on one canvas, but having been highly trained in traditional methods, he knew that the parts of a picture had to be brought into a unity. He studied his subject intensively before beginning to paint; then if he failed, he took a fresh canvas and tried it a different way.

The Blue Rider Group and abstract influences

Marc, Kandinsky and Klee, calling themselves *The Blue Riders,* formed a group who were affected by the abstract concerns of Cubism as well as the psychological interests of Expressionism. Marc painted animals so that they expressed states of feeling, ostensibly theirs but actually his own. He used violent blues, reds and oranges and agitated, angular shapes. Kandinsky finally

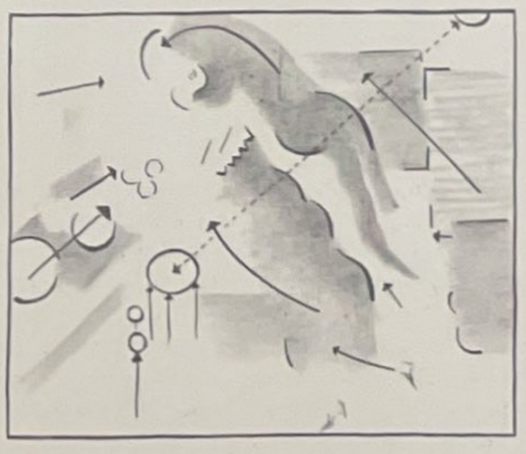




Oskar Kokoschka, in his painting of Florence's ancient and famous **Duomo,** has made a portrait of the building. Using slashing brushstrokes, he has heightened the changing rhythms in the arched facade and built them up to a climax in the dome. The round windows of the dome have been exaggerated until they appear like staring eyes. Though buildings ordinarily appear as static masses, Kokoschka has made this one seem like a conveyor of explosive forces (as shown by radiating lines in the diagram).

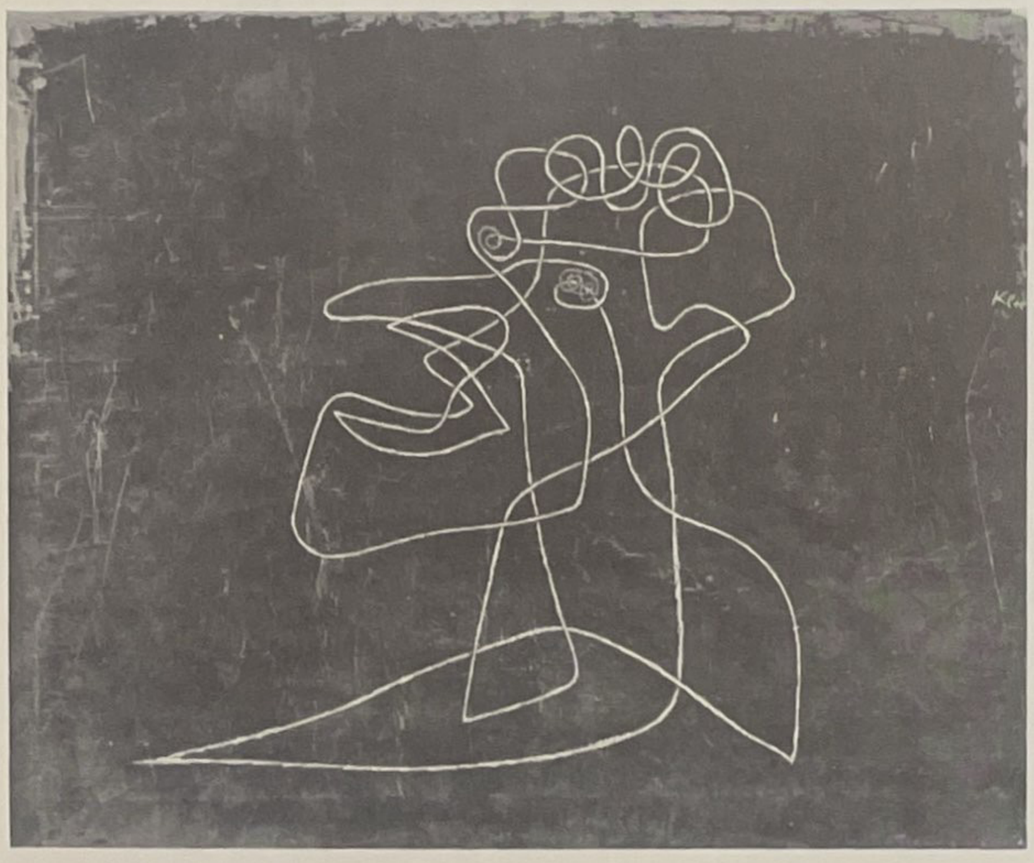
OSKAR KOKOSCHKA
The Cathedral, Florence
Minneapolis Institute of Arts (Lent by the artist)

In **The Birthday** by Marc Chagall, 1915-23, the figure of the artist floating across his Russian studio to give a birthday kiss to his wife illustrates Expressionist, emotional use of sensation. Every figure and object in this fantasy is rendered in rhythmic distortions which corroborate each other by consistently conveying qualities of buoyancy and resiliency.



MARC CHAGALL
The Birthday
The Museum of Modern Art, Lillie P. Bliss Bequest

eliminated from his pictures all traces of real objects. His zig-zags and scattered spots of color were improvised in states of extreme emotion, becoming, for him, symbolic of various moods. Colors of various intensities, juxtaposed with rhythmic and agitated lines, were thought of as acting in a dramatic interchange, originating in the artist's unconscious mind.



PAUL KLEE
The Mocker Mocked
The Museum of Modern Art,
gift of J. B. Neumann

Paul Klee's **The Mocker Mocked.** This face typifies Klee's ability to communicate his penetration into human character through the use of line alone. Although this thread of paint may have been made in a very painstaking way, it gives the effect of a single continuous gesture and may have originated in a casual doodle. The artist's hand making the line mimicked the expressive action of the face, exaggerating all of its aggressive, forward thrusting lines. The wit of the drawing comes also from the fact that the artist has used a minimum of means, with almost every line doing double duty. The diagram shows the line that begins as an eyebrow on the right becomes the eyeball on the left; the line that completes the jaw and ear also defines the far side of the neck. We enjoy this in the same way that we enjoy the double meaning of a pun.

Paul Klee found in children's drawings the example of expression that was humorously direct and playful. He learned from them to leave out everything that did not contribute to a vivid story-telling image. Substance disappeared from his figures and objects, leaving only the active lines. Every shape seemed to be acting out a part like a participant in a charade and arrows were used to show the path of movements. The motion in Klee's lines is the movement of the hand making it, not of the forms themselves. His is the best example of the "motor mimicry" referred to in our definition of empathy — motor meaning here just what it does in your car, the driving power of moving parts. Klee, as well as Kandinsky, often worked in a trance-like state, letting the pencil or brush move across the paper in a free scrawl. Their sketches, produced this way, resemble the doodles that people make on a pad when their conscious attention is elsewhere, as on a telephone call, and they unconsciously produce scrolls, spirals, fretworks and loops of line. However, because both Kandinsky and Klee were highly trained artists, with a lifetime recollection of forms stored up in their unconscious minds, their most spontaneous improvisations are always more skillful and knowing than they at first appear.

Sensation

An art based on empathy was bound to emphasize sensations. Jagged forms were used to convey excitement and also, since they are associated with barbed wire, spikes, thorns, etc., to suggest threatening forces. Leaning shapes or heavy forms balanced on slender supports conveyed a sense of instability. Quivering and convulsive forms were suggested by certain twisting lines and pulsating colors. Chagall added sensations of flying, in his figures floating over Russian villages. Such sensations as flying and balancing have many different kinds of association.

Mysticism and protest

Inevitably, artists concerned not with a physical world but with emotional and spiritual forces, would respond to mystical and religious subjects. Rouault, a devout Catholic, used Expressionist distortion to transform figures into religious symbols. Munch, the Norwegian, was inspired by an intense mysticism, as also were many of the Germans. However, others, like Käthe Kollwitz, were moved by pitiful social conditions. The common denominator between these subject interests was a sense of identification with a suffering humanity.

The Expressionists restored to art the psychological and associational values that the abstract movements had taken away. In doing so they often sacrificed a sense of structure as well as optical fact. However, at a time when conflict and restlessness filled the world, Expressionism provided a necessary channel for the revelation of the deepest human feelings.

CHAIM SOUTINE
Roosters (Dead Fowl)
Courtesy of The Art Institute of Chicago

Chaim Soutine has made his **Roosters,** dead fowl flung over a chair, into a symbol of brutal destruction rather than a prospect for a good dinner. By building up dramatic dark and light contrasts and turbulent surfaces, and by exaggerating the brokenness of the forms, Soutine makes you identify with the death agony of the rooster. The form itself is not in movement, but every line that composes it is agitated and active. Soutine wants you to feel the twisting movement in your nerves and muscles, just as he did in painting it.

Anxiety, 1894, by Edvard Munch, shows the typical psychological emphasis of this Norwegian master whose distorted forms inspired the German Expressionists. The diagrammatic drawing shows the recurrence throughout the composition of amoeba-like motifs.

EDVARD MUNCH
Anxiety, 1894
Oslo Municipal Collections

The Fauves

What

A painting style which has these main characteristics: use of intense colors in combinations of complements or opposites; drawing directly with color with no preconceived plan, no working over or corrections; paint put down in broken strokes which allow background (usually white) to show through; bold use of black to heighten colors (not to model); emphasis on all the active lines in a composition; wavy lines enclose flat shapes; preference for vigorous rather than pretty aspects of such subjects as beaches, harbors, orchards, busy streets and freely interpreted portraits.

Who

Matisse (leader and oldest); Derain, Vlaminck, Dufy, Braque, Marquet, Rouault, Camoin, Manguin, Friesz and Van Dongen.

Where

Headquarters at Paris but much Fauve painting was also done in such colorful spots as Le Havre, Collioure and Ciotat on the Mediterranean.

When

Group gathered together beginning with 1900 and even before but had their most famous exhibitions between 1904 and 1907. Most of the group later abandoned the Fauve style and had begun to go their separate ways by 1910.

The Fauves

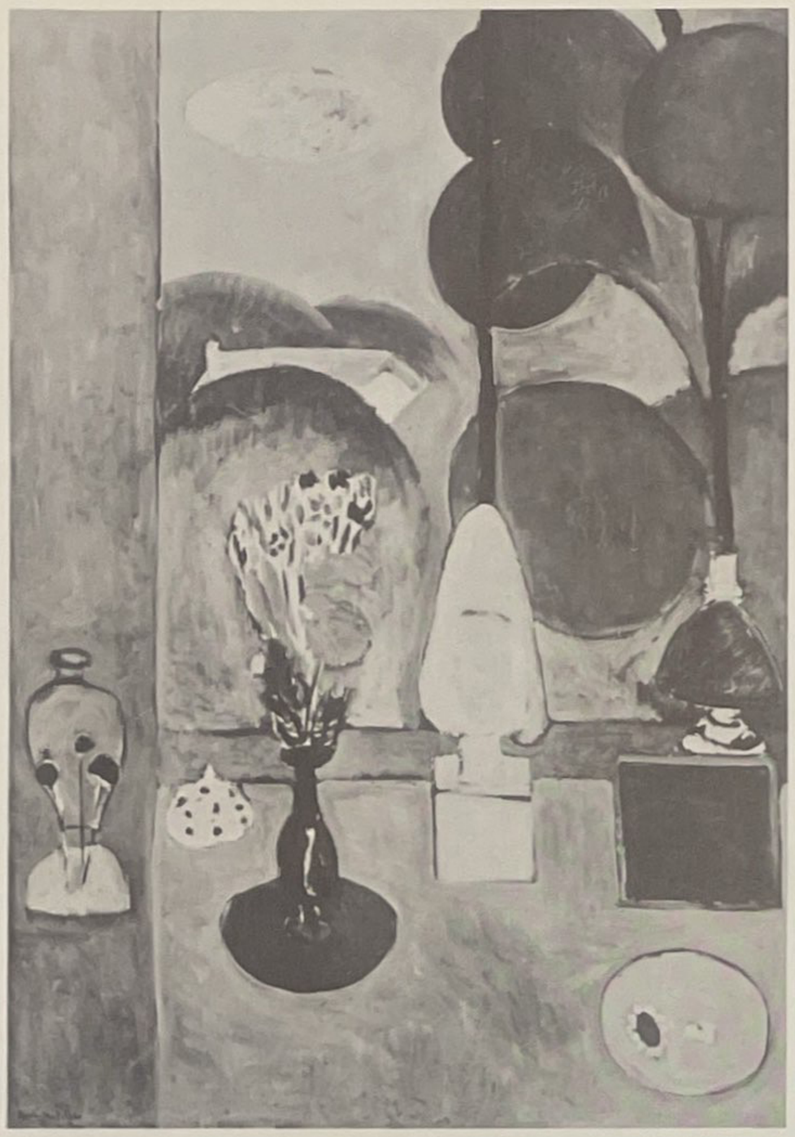
The first important art movement of the 20th century was Fauvism, introducing riotous colors and explosive rhythms which shocked almost everyone in 1905, though today theirs are among the most popularly appreciated paintings. This style was launched by a group of young students who had come together in schools (especially that of Gustave Moreau) and in other ateliers where most of them had already acquired an intensive training in traditional painting. Matisse, a former lawyer and their more mature leader, had won considerable official recognition.

What these youthful rebels had in common was an admiration for innovations of the Impressionists and Van Gogh and Gauguin, and a belief that such examples could point the way to an even more direct and individualized expression. For a few years, they stimulated each other and exhibited together, pictures in which such distortions as green faces and purple tree trunks won them the name "the Wild Beasts."

While the Fauves admired the Impressionists' colors and Van Gogh's emotional simplifications, they felt less need than had these artists of justifying their distortions by appearances in nature. Nor did they feel the necessity, like Gauguin, of departing for distant shores in order to find exotic subjects. They felt that they had the right to change arbitrarily any ordinary subject and give it vividness, by interpreting it in the most individual and assertive manner possible. According to their credo, the picture's excitement lay not in the time of day it was painted, or in its unusual locale, but in the intensity with which the artist was able to transmit his sensation of the subject.

Dissonances in color

Using the same kinds of broad areas of color that Gauguin had arrived at in his late painting, the Fauves composed their colors less for harmonies than for striking contrasts. They relied on some of the same strong, complementary schemes that had been favored by Van Gogh – blues against oranges, greens against reds – but they spiked such large areas of opposing hues with splashes of still other colors, combining pinks, oranges and



HENRI MATISSE
The Blue Window
The Museum of Modern Art, Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Purchase Fund

In Matisse's **Blue Window** of 1912 a varied range of blues is carried from the interior — a windowsill with scattered ornaments — to the exterior of treetops and distant house. Against this unifying saturation of one color, islands of contrastingly warm color and broken patterns provide an oppositional play. The rhythm of the rounded, balloon-like shapes in the tree at the right is repeated boldly in the circular doilies at the bottom. A different rhythm is supplied by the varied colored squares of the child's slate and sculpture base, through their relationship to each other and to the long rectangles of the sill and window frame. That each of these apparently scattered shapes holds the other in place can be demonstrated by covering up any one shape and noting the resulting loss of unity in effect.

In Matisse's post-Fauve **Odalisque,** linear patterns keep up a lively play over the surface while modeling is suppressed on both figure and chair. The position of things, one behind another, is indicated by changes in line, in pattern and in adjustments of flat colors to each other.

HENRI MATISSE
Odalisque with Raised Arms
National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
Chester Dale Collection (Loan)

violets in ways that had been regarded as dissonant. They further sharpened contrasts of color by bold accents of black and white, often in vibrating patterns.

Explosive surfaces

The Fauves imitated Van Gogh's rhythmic broken strokes without attempting to get the same effects of solidity in forms. The spaces of white or tinted canvas that they often left showing between strokes added a vibrant quality, at the expense of weight. Since they accepted no responsibility for conveying the substantial character of such a form as a chair or a face, they were free to concentrate on the arabesque of its contour, to put down the enclosing outline with ever more vehemence and daring. The

Plum Blossoms, Green Background was painted by Matisse in 1948, four decades after his Fauve period, yet in it he preserves many of the qualities typical of earlier work: the fresh, freely painted surface, use of vibrating patterns in changing rhythms, broad expanses of brilliant colors.

HENRI MATISSE
Plum Blossoms, Green Background
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Albert D. Lasker

"handwriting" quality which in Van Gogh's work had been the expression of his emotion in the presence of the subject, became for the Fauves the mark of a personal manner. The rhythmic motion of the artist's hand making a flowing outline became a conscious element in the style. Artists tried to put down a line with immediacy, while the sensation of a shape was hot and vivid, and corrections were made alongside an initial outline with no attempt to obliterate the first try.

It was consistent with Fauve repudiation of academic slickness to accept any way of putting down paint that was direct and expressive. They even admired techniques as opposite to their own as the precisely painted canvases of Henri Rousseau, a naive, self-taught artist whose work was ridiculed by the critics. In his carefully rendered patterns they recognized a genuine emotion, just as they did also in African Negro and other primitive arts.

The Fauve artist was just as insistent on obtaining exact amounts and intensities of color as he was indifferent to surface finish. Matisse, putting down a spot of red next to a spot of blue for two boats on a beach, may brush them in as freely as would a child; but they are placed in considered relationship to every other shape. A lifetime knowledge of how colors define space, and shapes compose on a page, determines every flick of the brush.

Derain's 1907 **Interior with Still-life** shows Fauve's characteristic slashing brushwork, use of strongly contrasting colors and values, and active oppositions of outlines.

ANDRÉ DERAIN
Interior with Still Life
Private Collection

ANDRÉ DERAIN
Beach Scene
Collection of Walter P. Chrysler, Jr.

In **Beach Scene,** Derain's flowing outlines appear to be as direct and unplanned as those of a child's drawing, yet he has skillfully varied the patterns of brushstrokes and the size and position of shapes so as to create a unifying movement over the entire surface. Note the effect of openness obtained by carrying the same kinds of strokes from the water onto the beach, and from distant buildings into the sky and also by using similar outlines in both foreground buildings and boats.

In Marquet's **The Fair,** 1906, shapes are set down freely and spontaneously, but a trained understanding of composition guides the apparently childishly simple rendition of fair buildings as rectangles, and people as scattered spots of color.

ALBERT MARQUET
The Fair
Collection Mme. Albert Marquet, Paris

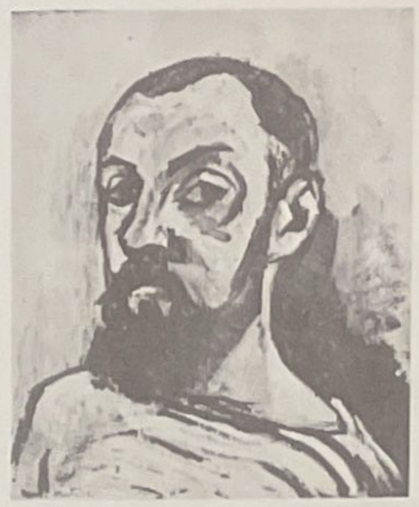
Vlaminck was strongly under the influence of Van Gogh when he painted **The Man with a Pipe** in 1900. His emotional distortions and application of paint with a palette knife in a vehement "handwriting" anticipated means used by such later Expressionists as Kokoschka and Soutine.

MAURICE VLAMINCK
The Man with the Pipe
Owned by the artist

In his **Tugboat on the Seine,** 1906, Vlaminck painted a scene similar to those favored by the Impressionists, but showing the more drastically simplified shapes, bolder contrasts and more active brushwork that characterized the Fauve style.

MAURICE VLAMINCK
Tugboat on the Seine
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. John Hay Whitney

HENRI MATISSE
Self Portrait
Royal Museum of Fine Arts,
Copenhagen



Matisse's early **Self-Portrait,** with its vehemently slashed-in outlines, typifies Fauve striving for the utmost directness in method.

MAURICE VLAMINCK
Portrait of Derain
Private Collection

Vlaminck's **Portrait of Derain** shows the characteristically Fauve way of drawing directly with color, using flattened shapes with free and fluid contours.

Many versions

A Fauve artist often took a motif through changes in many different canvases before he realized the quality he was after, and the finished picture showed none of the effort expended. The supreme example is Matisse, who has preserved more Fauve qualities in his mature work than any others in the original group. Matisse has carried out as many as two dozen versions of the same picture. In the final result the colors fall into place as naturally as the notes in a song and with unquestionable rightness. The greatest "wild beast" of them all was the one who tamed his colors through the most exacting discipline.

Henri Rousseau, an elderly, self-taught painter, who had arrived at his unique style quite independently, was admired by the Fauves as well as Cubists. The young Fauve rebels saw in his imaginatively invented jungle scenes objectives similar to their own. They were impressed by his bold use of flat patterns but even more so by his devotion to subjects, involving stark emotions, rather than visual appearances. The fact that le Douanier (the tax collector) Rousseau dreamed up his jungle episodes after visits to the botanical gardens, did not take away from his genuine feeling for the primitive.

HENRI ROUSSEAU
Jungle with a Lion
Collection of Museum of Modern Art

Cubism

Who

Pablo Picasso, a Spaniard, and Georges Braque,
a Frenchman, later joined by Juan Gris, also Spanish,
Fernand Léger, Roger de la Fresnaye and a number of other French artists.

What

A semi-abstract style which aims to express the artist's sense of structure through arrangements on his canvas of geometrical shapes derived from objects in reality. The forms that appear in the picture have been arrived at by a process of imaginatively simplifying, breaking down, and separating out parts and qualities of objects, and then recombining them into somewhat homogeneous shapes and colors to form a new unity.

Where

Originating in Paris, the movement later spread throughout Europe and also became very influential in the United States, especially affecting the field of design and architecture as well as painting.

When

Early analytical phase, 1908 to 1912; later synthetic stage beginning in 1912, pursued intensively for about ten years by the originators of the movement and intermittently or in adulterated variants until the present.

Cubism

Picasso and Braque, who originated the most influential style of the 20th Century — Cubism — took the ordinary things around them, the odds and ends that come together on a studio or café table and, with the aid of the tools of imagination that Cézanne left them, transformed them into new entities, having a life that belonged half to the geometrical character of the picture surface and half to the world of reality. In their new art they took a long step away from the nature of leisured landscapes, transient atmospheres and whimsical moods. They moved toward an art whose strong tensions seemed to belong to the dynamic tempo of the 20th Century.

Architectural expression

The search for ways of representing the permanent and unchanging aspect of things led the two artists at first to ideas that are more related to architecture than to conventional painting. Buildings endure while many other things change, and they are a sign of human triumph over chaotic forces of nature. If a being came down out of the sky, the moment that he sighted the rectangular walls of a building he would know that the earth was inhabited.

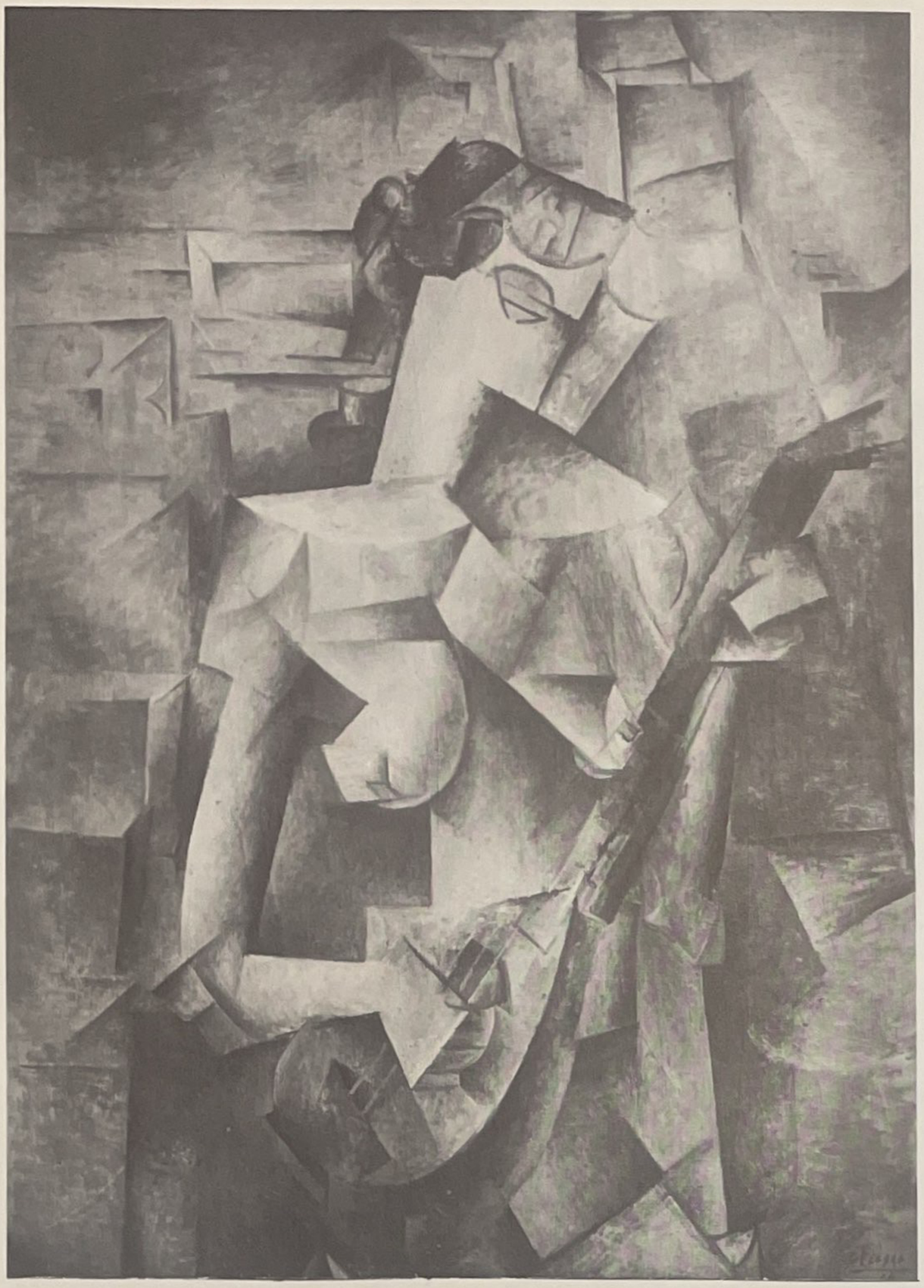
Geometrical shapes

In 1908, Picasso and Braque, working separately, but both having studied works by Cézanne, began to introduce into landscapes, wall-like surfaces in rocks and roads, cylindrical and conical forms in trees. Both of them had found in Cézanne's simplified and solidly constructed forms the answer to certain lacks felt in their previous work — Braque in his Fauve pictures and Picasso in the moody paintings of his pink and blue periods. They accepted Cézanne's way of building forms with solidly defined sides but rejected his Impressionist-derived color.

Since both Impressionism with its fleeting effects and Fauvism with its emotional improvisation seemed to Picasso and Braque to be at the opposite pole from the kind of art they aimed at, they sought a type of color completely divorced from these styles. Their solution was to go back, at first, to the values of the old masters. They used tones of gray with creamy tans and slate blues (colors associated with architecture), applying the paint in little chisel-shaped strokes like Cézanne's.

Disintegrating solids

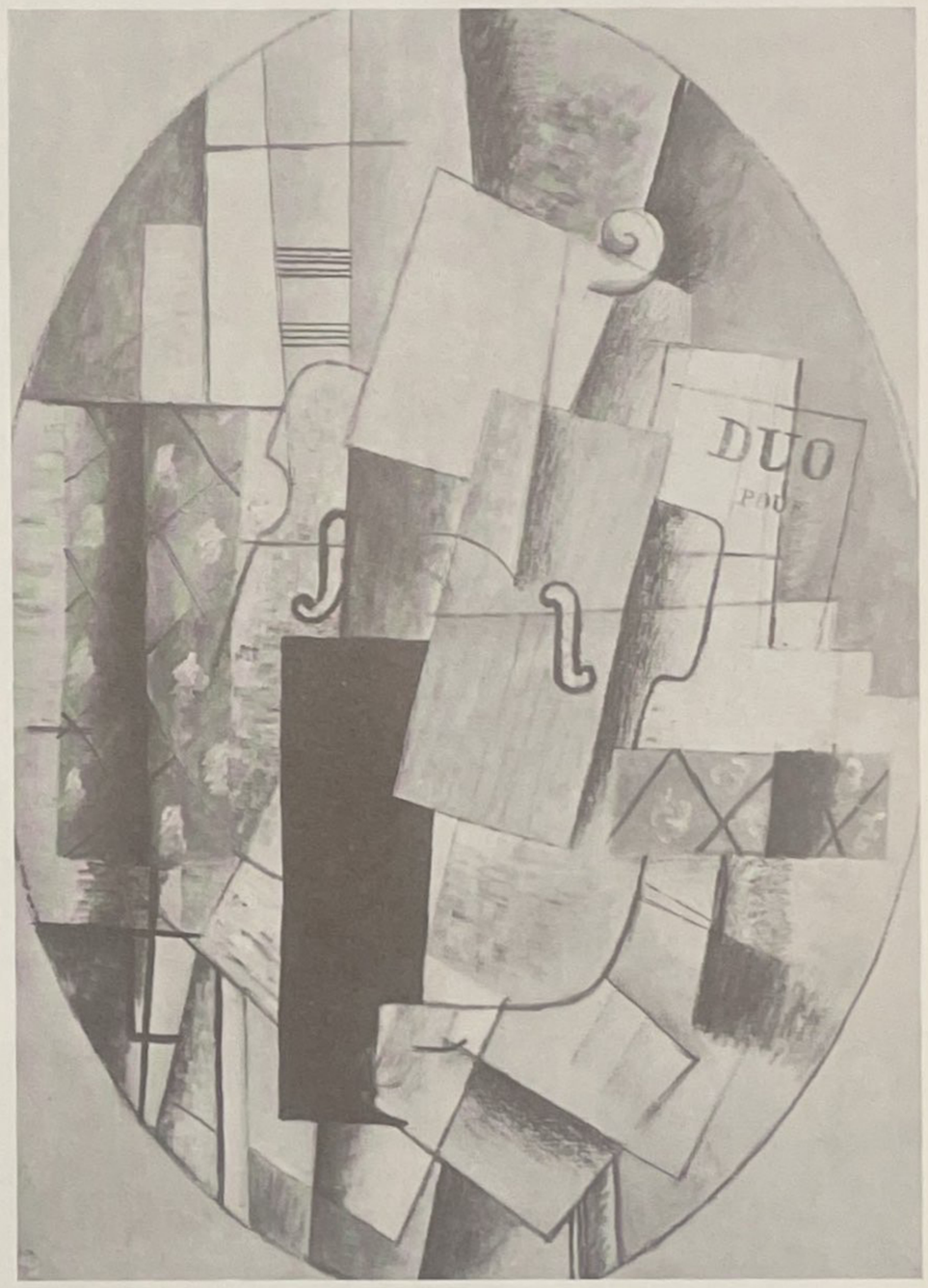
Cézanne's conception of the picture as a limited, cube-like space, with a back wall paralleling the picture plane, challenged the



PABLO PICASSO
Girl with a Mandolin
Collection of Roland Penrose, London

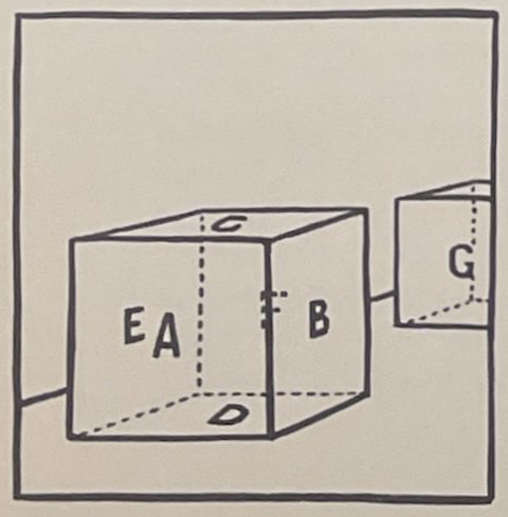
Girl with a Mandolin, 1910, by Picasso, is a classical example of early analytical Cubism. The figure has been reduced to its basic, cylindrical shapes and these have been rendered as if seen simultaneously from different viewpoints. The squared face is seen from just below eye level and in profile, while a three-quarter view is suggested by the plane extended at the right. One shoulder and breast, however, are dropped down in a stair-step formation resembling a bas-relief. The feeling of many-sidedness is echoed by the rectangles bevelled back at angles in the surrounding space.

Oval Still Life which Braque painted in 1914, has the effect of a collage though it is actually executed entirely with paint and crayon. In it a violin has been disintegrated into fragments emblematic of its wood-grain surface, thickness, curving volutes, etc. and these are shuffled with other parts of programs and musical folios. The relationship into which these pieces fall is determined partially by the oval frame.

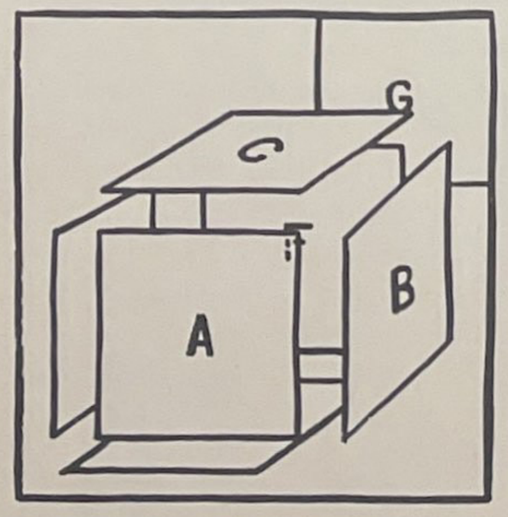


GEORGES BRAQUE
Oval Still Life
The Museum of Modern Art, gift of the Advisory Committee

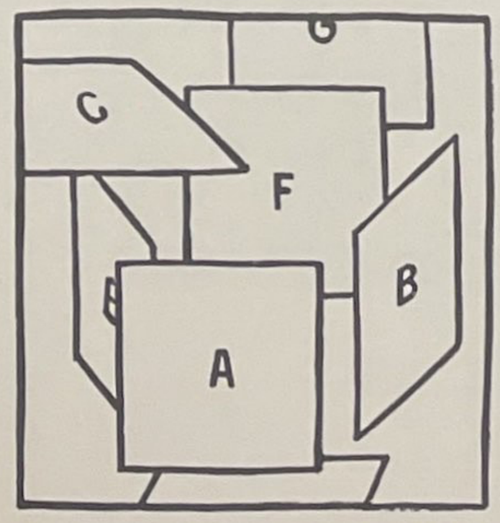
Progressive disintegration of solid forms in Cubism



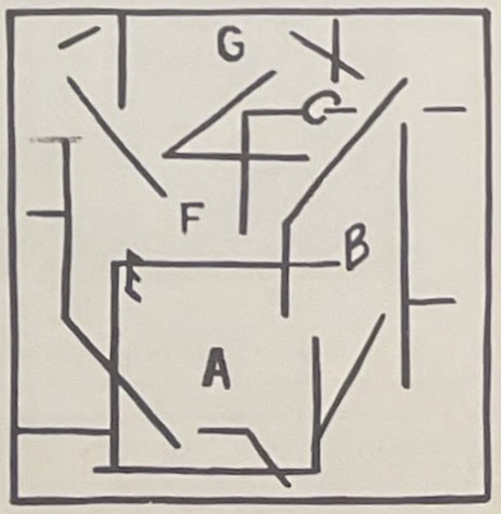
1—Cube in perspective.



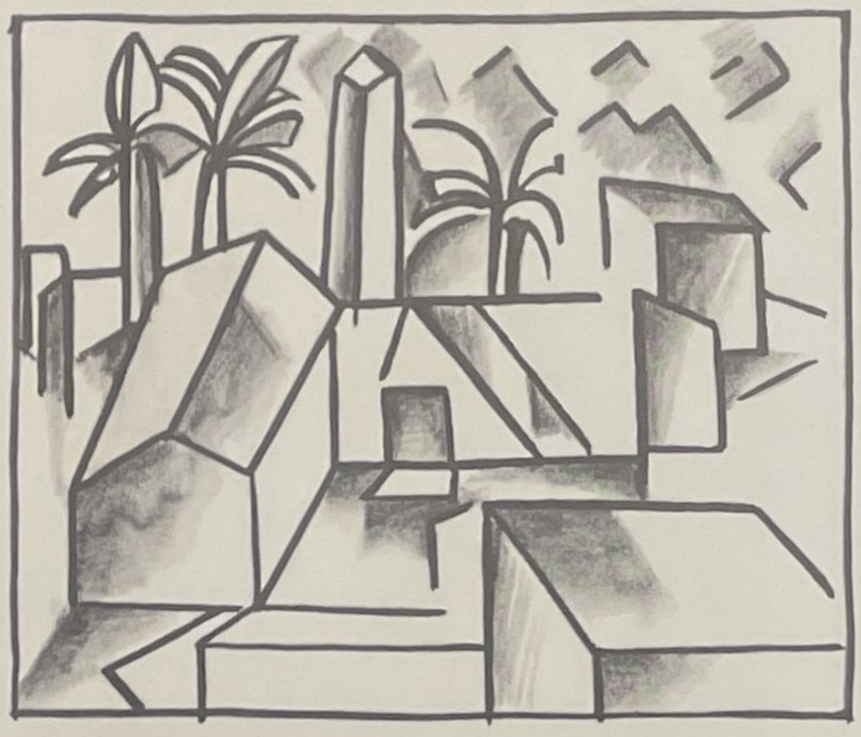
2—Sides of cube fall out; as if attracted magnetically by the sides of the picture.



3—Sides, now separate planes, shift into positions that more nearly parallel the picture plane and push up higher in the space.



4—Planes become transparent, mingling with each other and with planes from adjoining objects. Edges that move toward the depth are checked by other lines that return the eye to the picture plane.



PABLO PICASSO
Factory at Horta
Museum of Western Art,
Moscow

In Picasso's early Cubist painting of **Factory at Horta** buildings and trees were reduced to planes which were pushed up into the space to parallel the picture plane. The diagrams show a linear analysis of the picture and a perspective reconstruction of the same elements.

Cubists. In order to fill out such a cube-like space and define it in their pictures, they carried even further the breaking down of shapes. Forms were first reduced to numerous facets and then as many as possible of these were turned to face the picture plane. As this happened, the spaces between the planes were compressed, and the connectives that held them together in one form were stretched and broken. As the flat sides of the cubes fell apart, they gave something of the effect of those structures made of playing cards that children often build. Soon every part of the surface, background and foreground, was made of these cards. The artists even made some of the cards transparent, so that one shape would appear to belong to two different forms at once. Since the little flat planes were accented on only one or two sides, the eye passed easily from card to card along the open sides. This reinforced directions up and across the surface instead of into the depth.

The two-dimensional surface

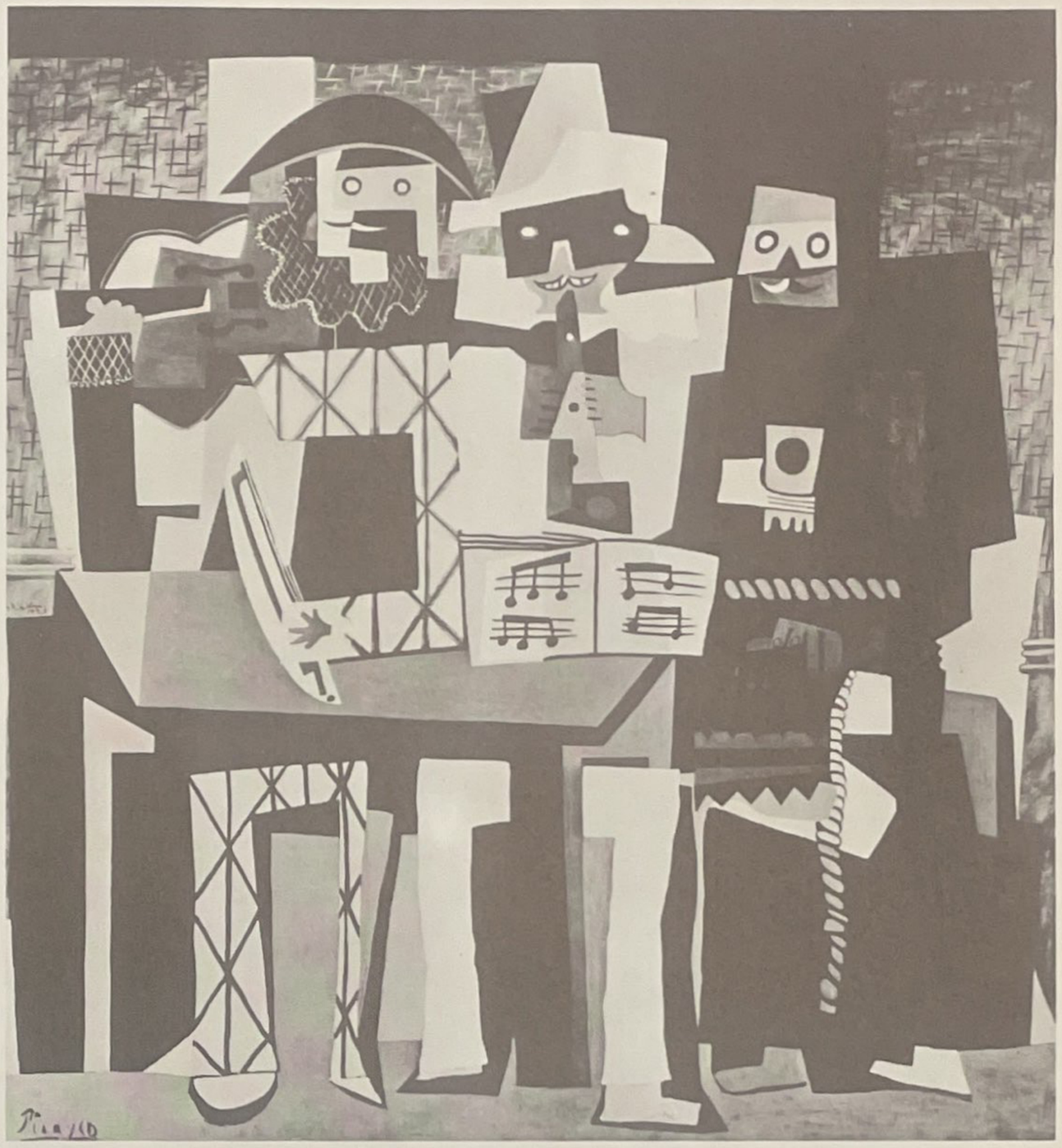
At no stage of the Cubist development did Picasso and Braque intend their forms to seem actually flat like those of a wallpaper design. Both artists had been too thoroughly trained in conceiving forms in volume to be satisfied with a merely decorative arrangement in a picture. Their innovations were directed, instead, to finding equivalents on the flat surface for forms felt as three-dimensional. The process was one of constantly pushing up into the space of the picture the card-like planes. Although some diagonal edges always remained, leading back to the depth, they were invariably blocked by upright planes which forced the eye back to the surface. The effect of this constant thrust and return action was to convey a sensation of tugs at the surface, coming simultaneously from different directions.

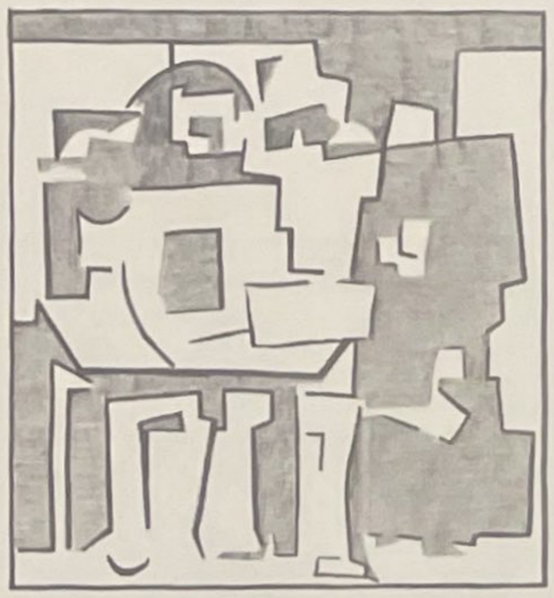
Collage

There was no room in this process for showing particulars like the printed surface of a newspaper, the label on a bottle or the grainy texture of wood on a table top. Perhaps it was because of the resulting monotony of surface that both artists began to feel the need for restoring some of the real qualities of things they had so completely eliminated.

Braque tried pasting a strip of imitation wood-grain paper onto a painted surface representing a table in a painting. Picasso experimented with pasting oilcloth onto a still life. In both cases it worked. The pasted material which would have looked so incongruous on the surface of a traditional picture with its "window-pane" character, actually seemed appropriate when applied to the Cubist surface which was so frankly a painted

PABLO PICASSO
The Three Musicians
A. E. Gallatin Collection,
Philadelphia Museum of Art





The Three Musicians by Picasso, 1921, one of the most monumental works of Synthetic Cubism, is a demonstration on a grand scale of its method of constructing forms by means of flat shapes (parallel to the picture surface) which act as space-defining planes. At the right a somber monk who plays a zither which is lying on his lap, emerges from a vertical panel of dark tones. His two companions, a Pierrot and Harlequin, seated behind the table and playing a recorder and violin, respectively, are formed by predominantly light planes sliding back or in front of each other and sandwiched between extended planes of dark tone. Dark planes stand for both local colors and those shadowed areas which create effects of recession. The touches of pattern that brighten this severe scheme in such items as the monk's knotted rope, sheet music, etc., serve also to complete the spatial arrangement by giving directional force to planes.

one. Introducing this piece-of-the-real-world into the abstract framework of the picture made it easier to identify the object. It also added a decorative textural change. The new technique was called collage, after the French word for pasting.

Synthesis replaces analysis

Collage suggested the possibility of building up the picture from larger units which could be painted on just as well as pasted on. It ushered in the second phase of Cubism, called Synthetic Cubism. Now that Picasso and Braque had proved that they could develop forms which had the quality of permanence, forms entirely delivered from the flimsiness of Impressionism, they were no longer afraid to use brighter colors and curving shapes. They now composed pictures with large flat areas, with curving as well as angular edges. They imitated textures with paint and used bright colors, made even more striking by strong contrasts of black and white.

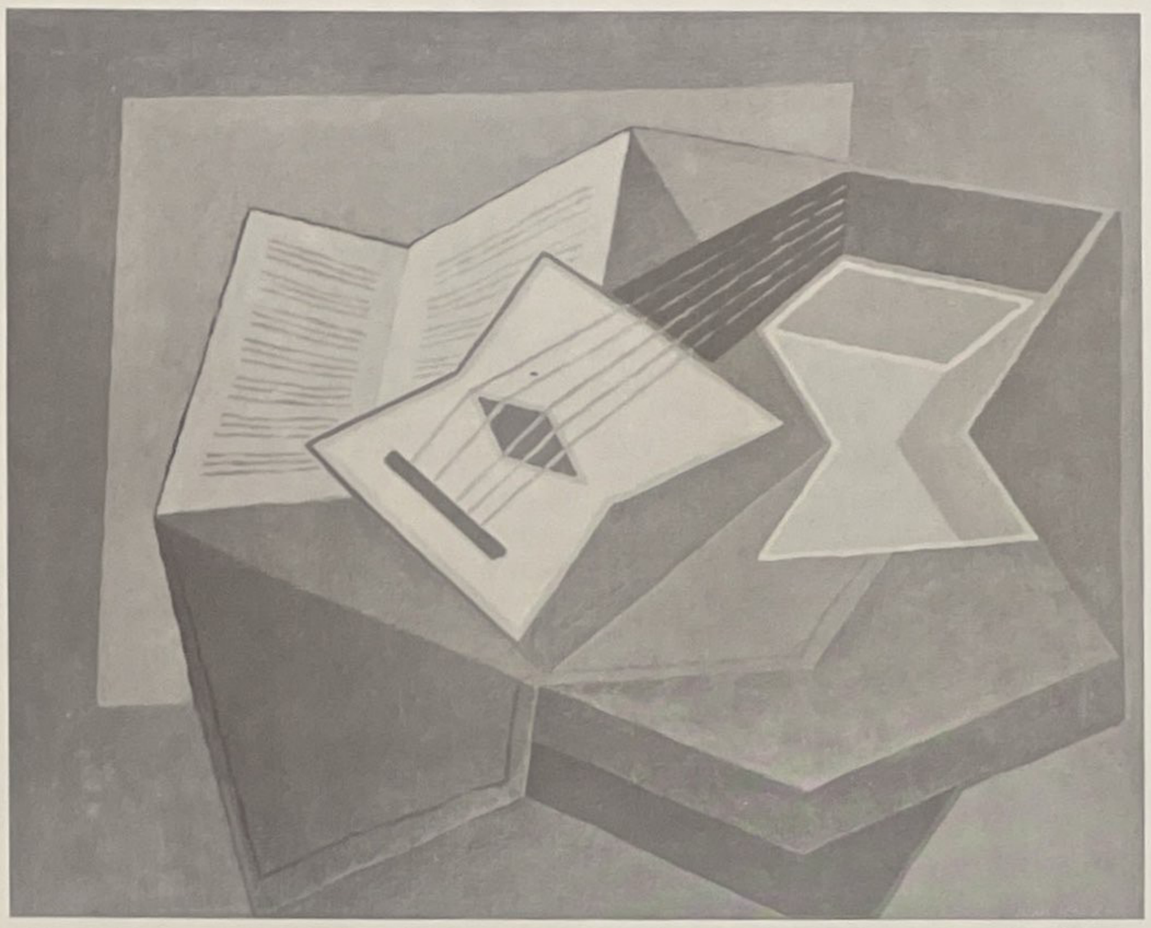
Homogeneous shapes

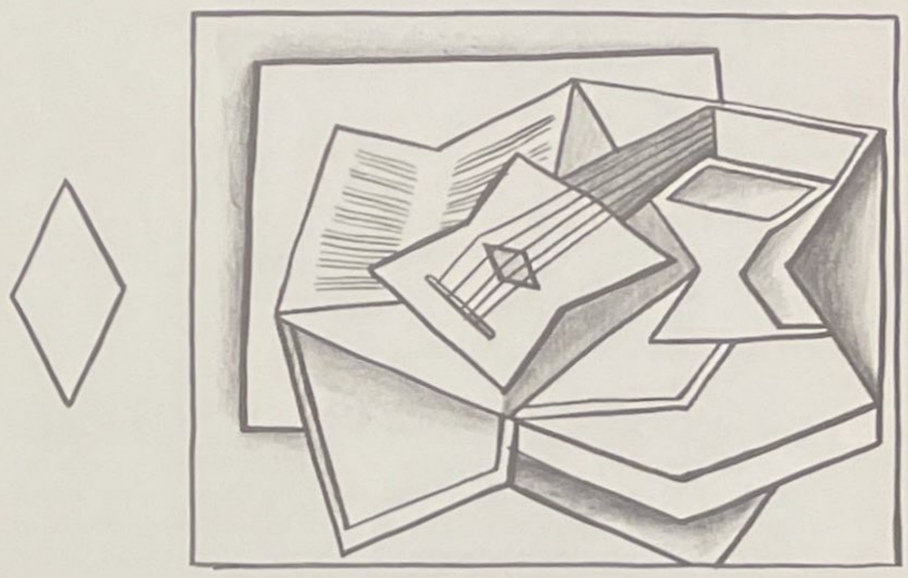
Objects were still thought of as having parts that could be transposed. The round guitar had to give up part of its roundness to conform to the square table top. Both had to give up partially their horizontal axis in order to conform to the vertical wall adjoining. In the same way, the brown of a table top was extended up into the wall space and the blue of a wall was dropped into a table shape.

Delaunay's **The Eiffel Tower,** 1910, shows how some Cubists, in dislocating and then reassembling forms, achieved explosive effects resembling those of both Expressionism and Futurism.

ROBERT DELAUNAY
The Eiffel Tower
Kuntsmuseum, Basel

JUAN GRIS
Yellow Guitar
Curt Valentin Gallery





The diamond shape motif which appears in most forms in this picture typifies the homogeneousness of shapes in Cubism. The motif which may be angular or curved, even irregular, results from the adjustment of each shape to the contour and direction of its neighbor and to the demands of the picture as a whole. The diagrammatic drawing is from Juan Gris' **The Yellow Guitar,** 1926.

Juan Gris painted this still life as if he were stationed at a point directly overhead looking down on the table and also on the chair underneath it. Diagram A shows parts of the picture which reflect this diagonal perspective scheme, including the cup which pushes out from the picture plane. Diagram B shows the transparencies which form an opposing structure of verticals and horizontals. The bands of tone which weave from the remote background plane of the floor right through the fruit on the table top return the various levels to the picture plane. The tilting axes of shapes suggest a rotating motion from upright to resting, and also circulate movement across the picture surface.

Diagram A

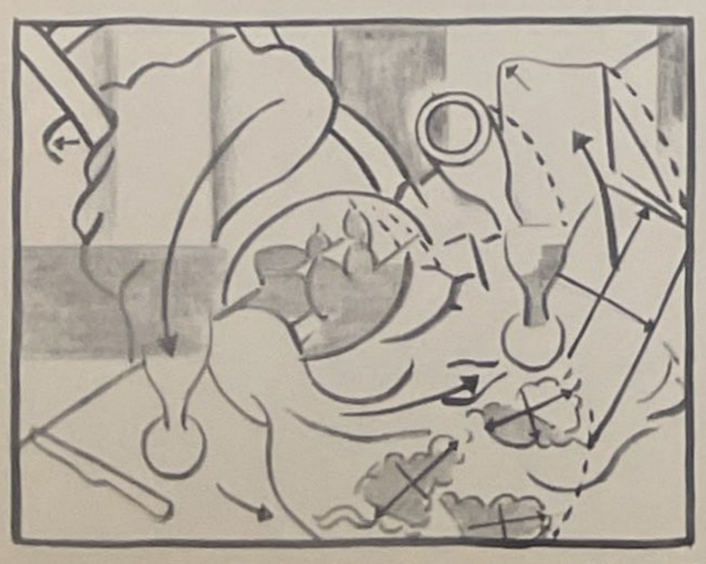


Diagram B

JUAN GRIS
Still Life with Chair
Courtesy of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Henry Clifford

FERNAND LÉGER
Three Women
The Museum of Modern Art,
Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund

Léger's **Three Women,** 1921, painted in his individual variation of the Synthetic Cubist style, is composed of tubular shapes which appear to be as precise and interchangeable as those of the machines he admired so much. Here also he has juxtaposed patterns alternating in lights and darks in such a way as to create an active effect of vibrating back and forth, like the interlocking gears of a powerful engine.

Tranposing qualities of things

The artists were now shifting around *qualities* of things as well as *parts* of things. Brown-ness, blue-ness, roundness and squareness were maneuvered around in the space until they fell into a relationship in which no shape could be changed without damage to the picture.

Variations and applications of Cubism

At this period Picasso and Braque were working separately and they were joined by many other artists, including Juan Gris (who had shared an earlier stage with them), De la Fresnaye, Delaunay and Léger. Léger, in particular, saw in these interchangeable parts of Cubism forms like those of machinery, a quality which he emphasized. Others turned Cubist fragments into different and personal emblems. All capitalized on the decorative appeal of the new style, and Cubism was to have a great influence on architecture, applied arts, and advertising.

Tensions

Throughout these changes the Cubists kept the balance between the structural picture elements and object elements, without giving in completely to either. When things are being balanced they are in a state of tension. Two opposite forces are exerting pulls and this conveys a sense of action. The quality of dynamic action which is so characteristic of Cubist pictures results from the form being pulled in two different directions at once. This has become a pervasive quality in modern art, making it seem, somehow, right for an age of machines, supersonic speed and the split atom, although the artist never had consciously in mind any of these things.

GEORGES BRAQUE
Still Life with Guitar
Collection of Walter P. Chrysler, Jr.

By 1927, when Braque painted this **Still Life with Guitar,** both he and Picasso had admitted curves and the full range of colors to their Cubist idiom. Interpenetrating shapes, however, are still employed to give an alternating advancing and receding action to the picture space. The vertical of the door frame drops down into the guitar as a dark plane which conveys its thickness. Space behind the instrument is defined by a light plane set at a different axis on the left of the pitcher.

Non-representational painting — (Abstract Art)

What

The use of geometrical shapes in compositions which have no reference to nature. The Dutch group, called De Stijl, emphasized shapes and lines meeting at right angles, and primary colors. In their severe schemes, the conventional balance of elements is replaced by an equalized surface tension. This is achieved by the pulls and counter pulls exerted by varied blocks of color and space intervals. Mondrian, in particular, disposed planes on the flat surface in such a way that by adjustments of direction and thickness of line, and size and intensity of color-shapes, they convey sensations of actively expanding and contracting. De Stijl principles of dynamic equilibrium were applied both to painting and architecture. At the German Bauhaus compositions of abstract planes were regarded as forming the basis for a style consistent with the age of machines and with a similar precision, efficiency and employment of interchangeable parts. The Bauhaus extended the application of design with planes to useful objects intended primarily to be functional.

Who

Members of the De Stijl group in Holland were: Theo Van Doesburg, publicist for the group and an architect, typographer and poet as well as painter; Piet Mondrian; Bart van der Leck; the architect, J. J. P. Oud; sculptor Georges Vantongerloo. Prominent Bauhaus artists working in non-representational styles included Moholy-Nagy; Herbert Bayer; Frederick Kiesler, architect and painter; Wassily Kandinsky and Josef Albers.

Where

Holland, Germany.

When

Formative period began after analytical Cubism in 1912. Formation of groups with a program of non-representational art, called neo-plasticism, dates from 1917 in Holland. Completely abstract styles gained influence at the Bauhaus during the Twenties. During the Nineteen Thirties and Forties, individual artists both in Europe and America were working in geometrical styles but were not united into groups.

Non-representational painting

Mondrian was an artist who expressed strong emotions in his work, but they were not emotions about people or things but about order. This order of which the Dutch artist dreamed was of a particular kind – an order of simple, concrete but active elements. It was only at the very end of his life that Mondrian felt that he had accomplished what he had set out to do: to create, on canvas, a sequence of concrete forms related in an active equilibrium.

In color, the primaries; in line, the right angle

Because the relationships he was trying to plot were complex, requiring precise adjustments, Mondrian needed very simple elements to work with. He wanted to assign to each shape and color an exact and active role in the picture, a role that could not be confused or vague, and one which would have the same meaning to everyone. Shapes which referred to things in the real world would confuse the spectator's eye and keep him from seeing what was happening on the field of the canvas. Involved shapes would affect each other in too many different ways. The solution that Mondrian finally arrived at was to use only lines meeting at right angles, the most simple and direct relationship and one which was reinforced by the similar character of the picture frame itself. Similarly, he reduced his palette to black, white, grey and the three primary colors – red, blue and yellow.

The destruction of static balance

In nature things at rest have a static balance, an equilibrium which depends on support at many different points of contact. The old masters had imitated such a static balance by arranging shapes on either side of a center axis or by piling up forms on a broad base. The Impressionists, Cézanne and the Cubists, however, had already departed from such schemes when they visualized the picture surface as a grill. The latter two had demonstrated, also, that many elements of depth can be translated into movements up and across the surface. The Cubist planes, with their solid sides already opened by transparency and spread over the surface, provided an excellent starting point for Mondrian's search for a new kind of active relationship.

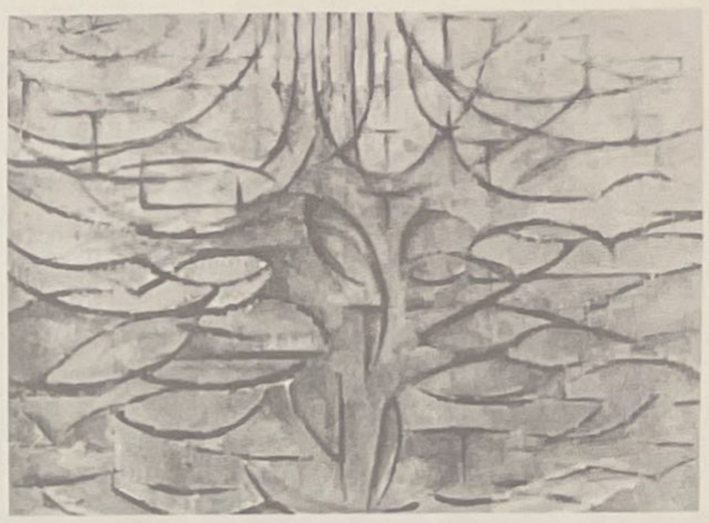
Gemeentemuseum, The Hague

Mondrian's rendering of a tree in descriptive, twisting lines.

Collection S. B. Slijper, Blaricum, The Netherlands

Edges of the trunk and branches are translated into planes following the structure of the tree.

Gemeentemuseum, The Hague



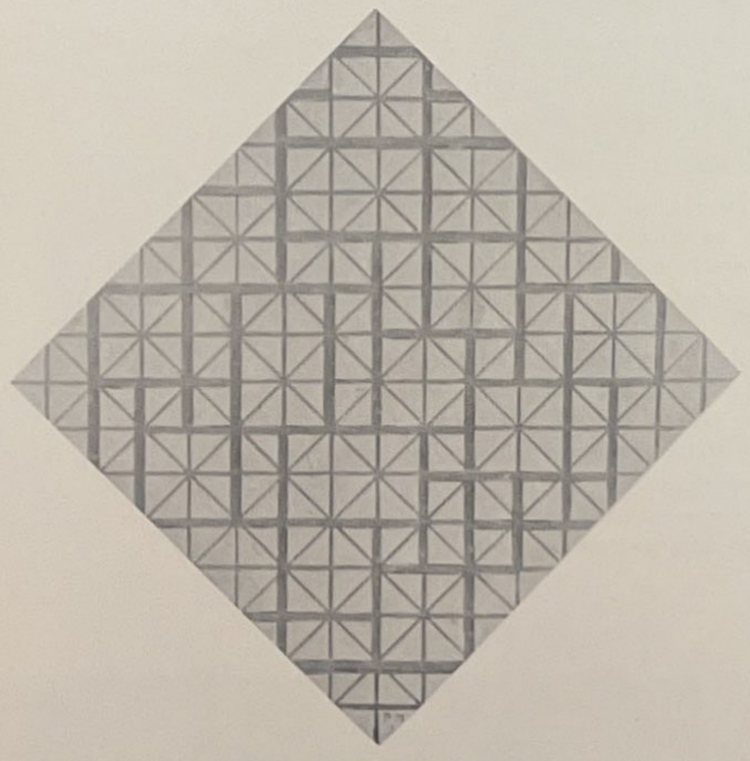
Planes derived from the tree become transparent and mingle with planes from surrounding space. Edges of planes become lines with predominant right-angular relationship.

PIET MONDRIAN
Pier and Ocean
The Museum of Modern Art,
Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund

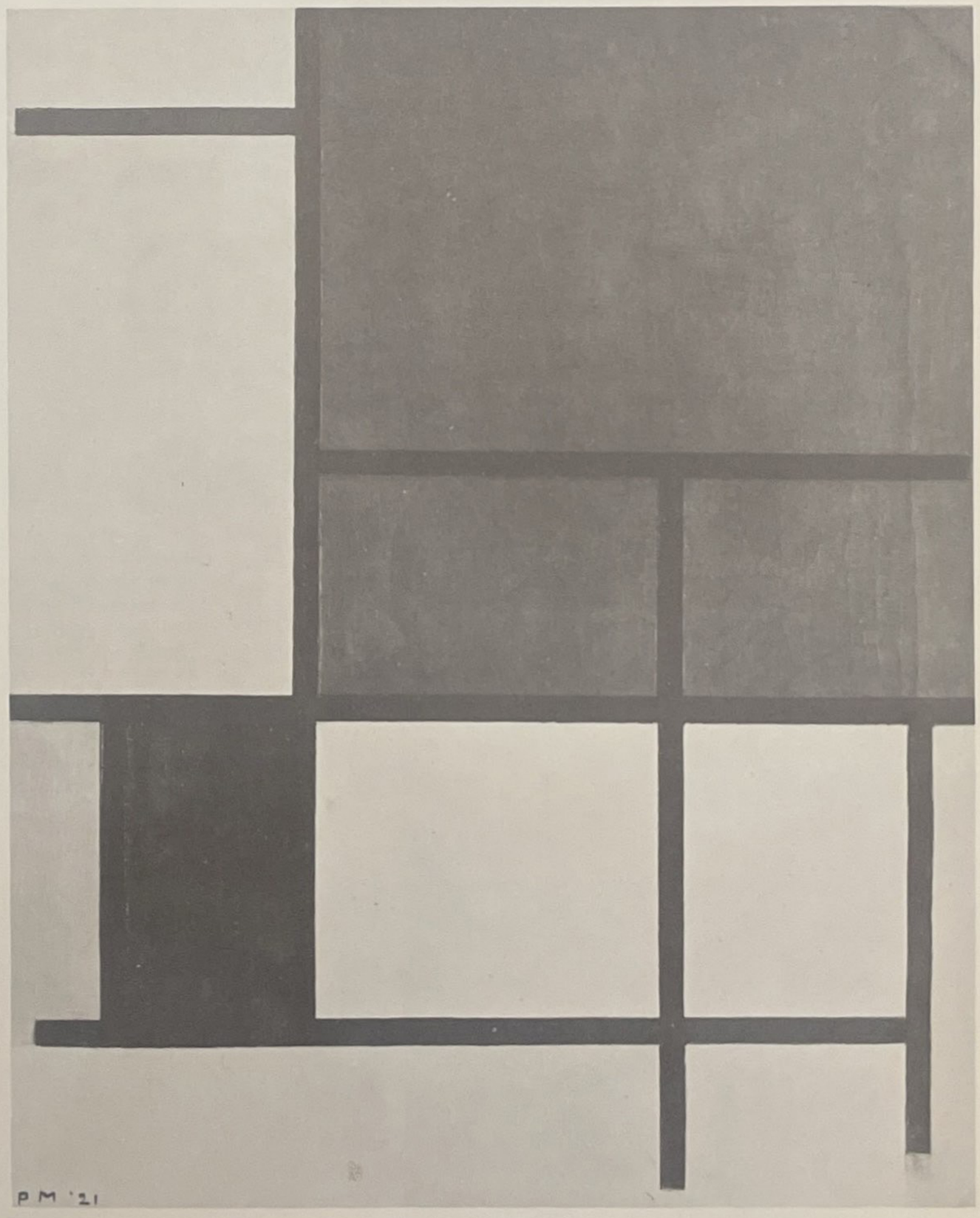
In this detail of **Pier and Ocean,** 1914, in crayon, pencil and wash, edges of planes have become lines which touch, or almost touch, each other or overlap in extremely diversified ways. They carry the eye from one open configuration to another at different rates of speed.

PIET MONDRIAN
Composition, 1921
The Museum of Modern Art,
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. John L. Senior, Jr.

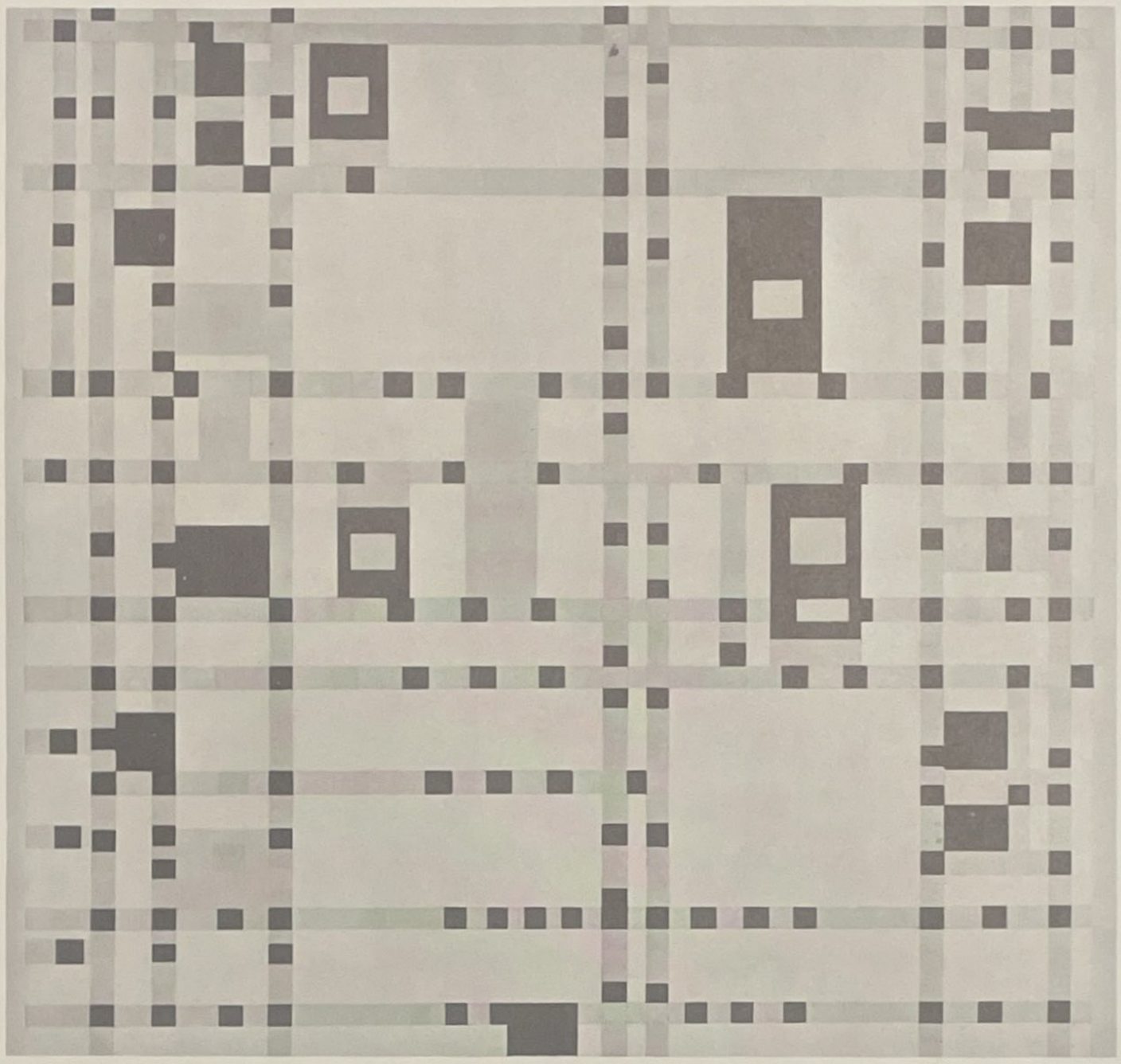
PIET MONDRIAN
Composition in Grey
Courtesy of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia



Mondrian's 1919 **Composition in Grey** shows the grill which is always present in the mind of the De Stijl artists, actually used as a basis for a composition.

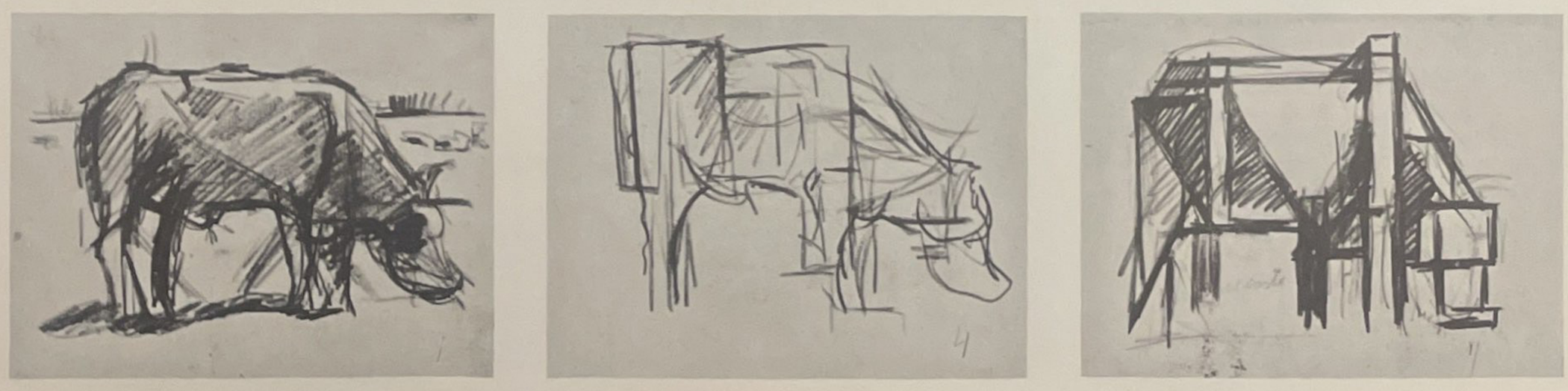


In Mondrian's 1921 **Composition** there are only vertical and horizontal lines, yet there are strong diagonal movements across the surface, especially from the upper right to the lower left. This movement is met by the counter-movement of the white areas and by the black lines. The "T" formation which enters the large square acts as a stabilizing force by grounding it to the bottom edge.



PIET MONDRIAN
Broadway Boogie Woogie
The Museum of Modern Art

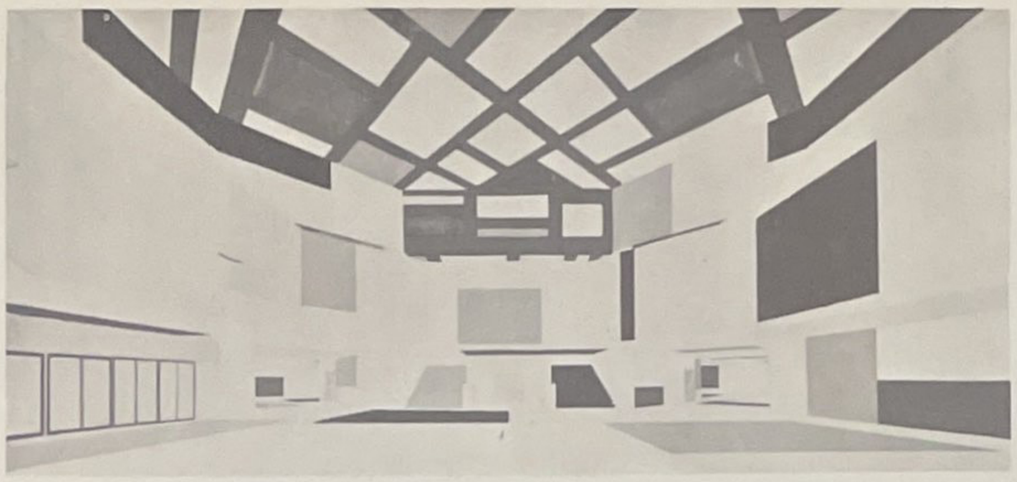
When Mondrian came to this country, he discovered in Boogie Woogie music a kind of art that seemed to parallel his own. In both, rhythmic progressions of two contrasting kinds were played against one another — in the music through intervals of time, in the painting through intervals of space. In the picture, **Broadway Boogie Woogie,** in which he gave monumental expression to this parallel, Mondrian departed from his former austere schemes and colors. Black lines are replaced by bands in delicate greys. These, in turn, are broken by little squares of oranges, yellows, reds and blues, in blended variations, and occasionally by larger rectangles. The eye skips along the bands at varying paces, responding to pulsations of color that bounce diagonally as well as up and across. These tensions tug at, but never actually break, the right-angular structure which is the only constant element.



Progressive stages in the drawing and painting of a cow by Van Doesburg show the process of abstraction carried from a starting point in nature to the conclusion in a completely geometric scheme. After being sketched realistically the form was simplified to angular shapes and then reduced to blocks of strongly contrasting colors. In the final stage connecting lines disappear and all parts of the form are represented by squares and rectangles. Some negative spaces, too, are translated into blocks of color, thus equalizing tension over the entire surface. In later work Van Doesburg, like Mondrian, abandoned all reference to nature as a point of departure.

THEO VAN DOESBURG
(3) Studies for Composition (The Cow)
The Museum of Modern Art

VAN EESTEREN, in collaboration with THEO VAN DOESBURG
Design for a University Hall
The Museum of Modern Art. Lent by Mrs. Theo van Doesburg



Van Doesburg's 1923 plan for color decoration to be applied to a university hall incorporates active color and line relationships in a decorative and not primarily functional scheme.

THEO VAN DOESBURG, in collaboration with Cornelis van Eesteren
Color Construction (Project for a Private House)
The Museum of Modern Art, Edgar Kaufmann, Jr. Fund

In this project for a private house, called **Color Construction,** by Van Doesburg and Van Eesteren, the color planes are actually intended to be walls. As in the paintings, they extend into the outside space in open configurations that circulate the attention and never let it rest at one point.

Dynamic balance

When a rectangle of red is set down on a white canvas it immediately offers certain possibility of action: action determined by its size, shape, intensity of color and relationship to the edges of the canvas. If it touches the bottom and extends along it, it will probably be regarded as being relatively at rest (providing an active ballast), while if it is placed high up and is both isolated and important in size and color, it may be felt both as pushing down and expanding. Another shape or line placed in relation to it will appear to receive and transmit the pressure exercised by the first one, and so on. There are no rules for measuring the exact character and direction of such pushes and pulls up and down and across the surface, though some have tried, so far unsuccessfully, to calculate them mathematically. The artist has to rely on a sense of relationship gained in a lifetime of studying forms and their behavior and effect on each other. He "feels into" the action of shapes, using a process of empathy (discussed under Expressionism). It was Mondrian's conviction that these pulls and movements could be channeled across the space in a continuous flow, sustained in all directions, so as to create an active unity.

Each shape dependent on another

In a Mondrian composition, no color-shape, no line or combination of lines can be lifted out of context. Each depends upon the other for its action and completion. The white areas that surround blocks of color and intervene between black lines are just as strong in their shape and positive contrast as are the colored shapes. In such a composition there are no "empty spaces."

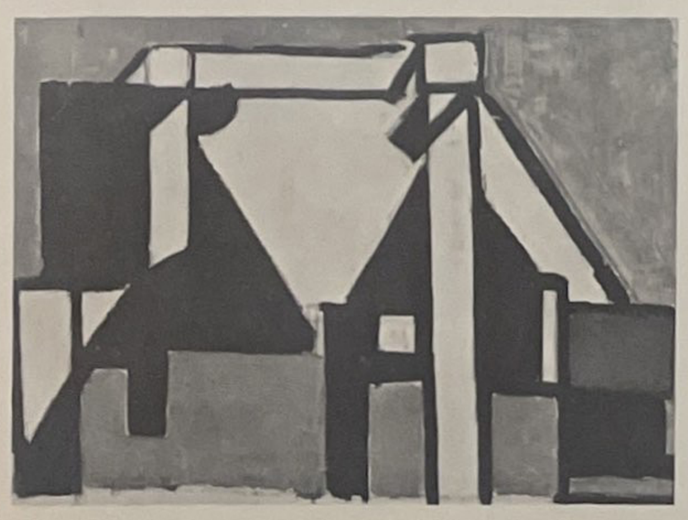
Effect on applied arts

The relationships that Mondrian expressed in his pictures sprang out of his perception of universal principles underlying appearances. It was not at all his intention to create a decorative style. Yet architects and commercial artists immediately saw that such relationships as Mondrian had demonstrated could be utilized in practical ways. His right-angular schemes coincided perfectly with modern steel-scaffolding building construction and encouraged a kind of architecture based on tensions between simple volumes.

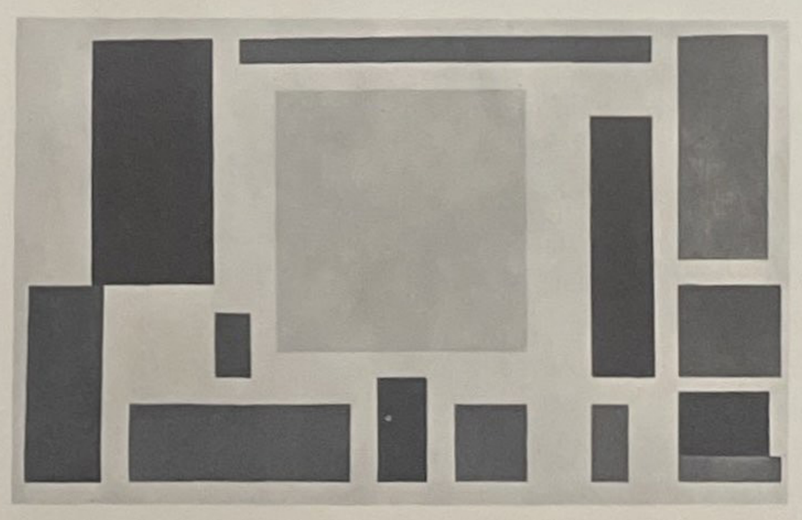
Layout artists, whose job is to arrange picture and blocks of type on a page, were also quick to appreciate the advantage of plotting shapes so that they appeared to be actively disposed across the space, rather than statically centered.

Influence on painting

Mondrian's influence has been felt not only on the work of artists using abstract geometrical styles but also on those employing shapes referring to nature. His compositions helped train the eye to perceive the way colors and lines actively affect each other by the way they are composed on the flat surface. His paintings created a new respect for the two-dimensional surface and heightened awareness of the precise effect of each shape and color that goes onto it.



THEO VAN DOESBURG
Composition (The Cow) Gouache
The Museum of Modern Art



THEO VAN DOESBURG
Composition (The Cow) Oil on Canvas
The Museum of Modern Art

Surrealism

What

A movement whose objective was to explore the realm of unconscious emotions and dreams through pictorial means. It stressed imagery with strong human associations rather than formal qualities of the picture. Although inspired by Freud, Surrealism never applied his theories in any systematic way. It developed a variety of techniques having in common only an interest in the fantastic, incongruous and irrational.

Who

Led by André Breton, the French poet, the earliest group included Man Ray, American; Max Ernst, German; Joan Miro, Spanish; and Jean Arp, André Masson, Pierre Roy, Yves Tanguy and René Magritte, all French. Salvador Dali, a Spaniard, became a Surrealist around 1930. Marcel Duchamp, French; Paul Klee, Swiss; and Marc Chagall, Russian, were claimed by the Surrealists, although not consistently identified with the movement. The Italian, Giorgio de Chirico, who had anticipated Surrealism in paintings done as early as 1910, had changed his style in the post-war period.

Where

With headquarters in Paris, Surrealism later developed a secondary center in New York and eventually its influence spread throughout Europe and as far as Japan.

When

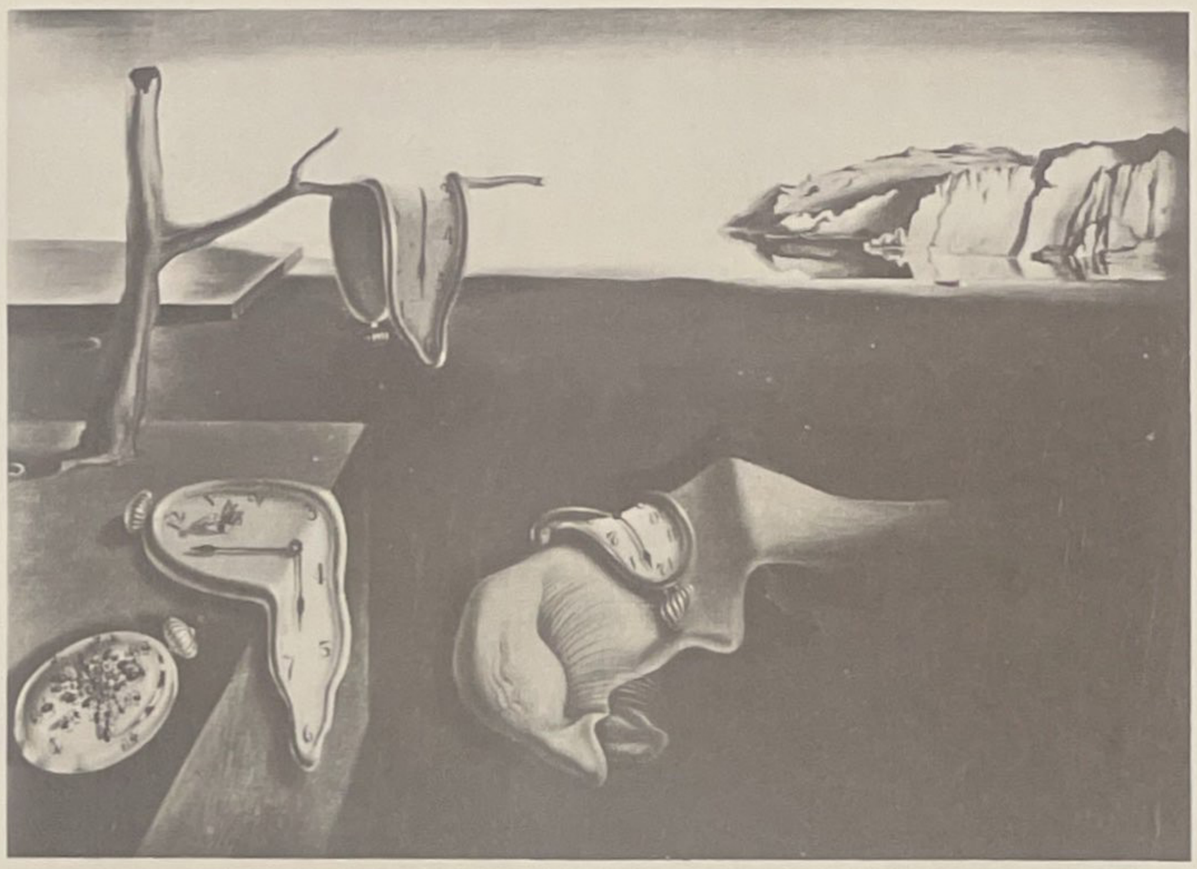
The first Surrealist manifesto appeared in 1924 and from that year exhibitions and manifestoes kept the group in a fever of activity that reached a climax in international exhibition of the late Thirties. The group dispersed about 1939, although the influence of individual members continues.

GIORGIO DE CHIRICO
Melancholy and Mystery of a Street
Collection of Mrs. Stanley Resor

The sense of the marvelous, which had played an important part in the work of such earlier artists as Bosch, Breughel and Goya, became the central concern of a group of artists who came together in the years following the First World War, calling themselves the Surrealists. This was a time when the psychoanalytical theories of Sigmund Freud had focused the attention of people everywhere on new explorations of the world of dreams. These artists and poets, in particular, saw in the new revelations concerning human emotion, vast possibilities for artistic expression. They set out to develop not another art style, but various means of tapping the hidden reservoir of feeling which, according to Freud's teachings, existed in the subconscious mind of everyone. How was the artist to put himself in touch with the world of strange fantasies that existed in his audience, unknown even to themselves? The movement eventually offered two different approaches. The first, earlier to develop and linked with the techniques employed by their poet associates, originated in automatic drawing or spontaneous "doodling" already discussed in the section on Expressionism. The second method, which grew out of the work of the Italian, De Chirico, is better known here because of its most sensational practitioner, Salvador Dali, who developed the technique which he himself called "hand-painted dream photographs."

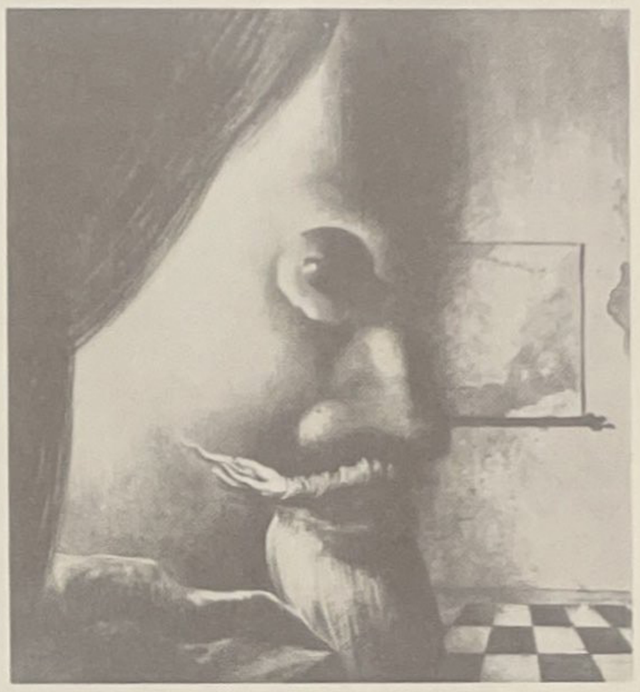
In **Melancholy and Mystery of a Street** De Chirico anticipated the disquieting mood which Surrealists later would cultivate by using lengthened shadows, empty arcades and steep perspectives whose vanishing points are not in agreement.

SALVADOR DALI
The Persistence of Memory
The Museum of Modern Art



The **Persistence of Memory,** 1931, is a perfect example of Salvador Dali's "hand-made dream photographs." In it he has used his meticulous "fool the eye" technique to make convincing to the spectator things which are shocking and logically impossible: watches behaving like limp pancakes, a watch case whose jet jewels turn into a swarm of ants, and a shape washed up on this infinite and barren shore, whose formless but organic quality has disturbing associations.

SALVADOR DALI
The Image Disappears
Private Collection



Dali's use of the double image is demonstrated in **The Image Disappears,** 1938, in which a woman's figure can also be seen as part of an enormous bearded profile.

A table top, with its ominous telephone, doubles for a mile-long stretch of Andalusian beach in this memory-association picture painted by Dali in 1938.

SALVADOR DALI
Imperial Violets
The Museum of Modern Art, gift of Edward James

Spontaneity

The paintings of André Masson and Joan Miro best exemplify the first approach because the free-flowing line in which all kinds of playful, erotic and ghostly images are spun out is so clearly not the product of a planned design. Apparently the artists evolved such motifs originally through letting the pencil or brush wander freely over a surface without conscious direction. The elaboration of these images into paintings was accomplished in a stage which permitted more conscious manipulation of brushes and paint, although the artist sustained something of the mood of intense inspiration. While the part played by chance (an irrational element) is deliberately cultivated by the artists, a strong personal quality is evident in the predominance in the work of Miro and Arp of free-form curves and in Masson's, of jagged lines.

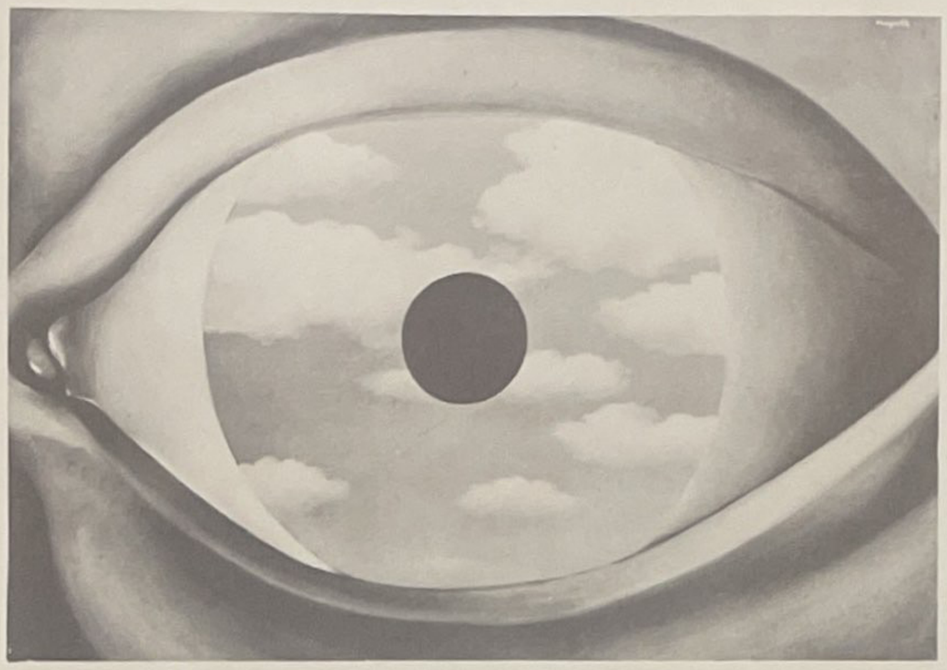
Dream photographs

As early as 1910 the Italian artist, De Chirico, had painted imaginary scenes of a dream-like world in a solid and convincing style that offered the example to later Surrealist artists. It was in his pictures of deserted city vistas that many devices typical of Surrealism first appeared, notably the lengthened shadows, steep perspectives and double images.

Whereas De Chirico's dream vistas had been poetic and haunting, those introduced two decades later by Dali, the tremendously skillful Spaniard, were shockingly grotesque and, at the same time, precisely detailed. His method was to bring together all kinds of things in the same topsy-turvy sequences in which they actually occurred in dreams and nightmares and render them as if he had concealed in his mind the mechanism of a camera. The technique that the Spanish artist used to project these "snapshots" was not new, but actually an ancient one, usually referred to by the French term, *trompe-l'oeil,* meaning "fooling the eye." His originality lay in the astonishing character of his subject matter.

Fooling the eye

In the *trompe-l'oeil* technique the artist offers the spectator a more detailed accounting of all parts of an object than he could possibly get from the naked eye in normal vision. Usually every form and every part of a form is modeled in tones from exact highlights to deep shadows, and the blurring that ordinarily takes place in the atmosphere is completely eliminated. Recession in perspective and cast shadows are both emphasized. Whereas in normal vision we see with absolute clarity only objects at the center of focus, in the *trompe-l'oeil* picture we see the most minute details of objects in all parts of the space, even in the distance. Brush strokes must be entirely concealed for the illusion to be successful.



RENÉ MAGRITTE
The False Mirror
The Museum of Modern Art

Magritte's **The False Mirror** is an unforgettable image and one with a symbolism more conscious than is usual for the Surrealist.

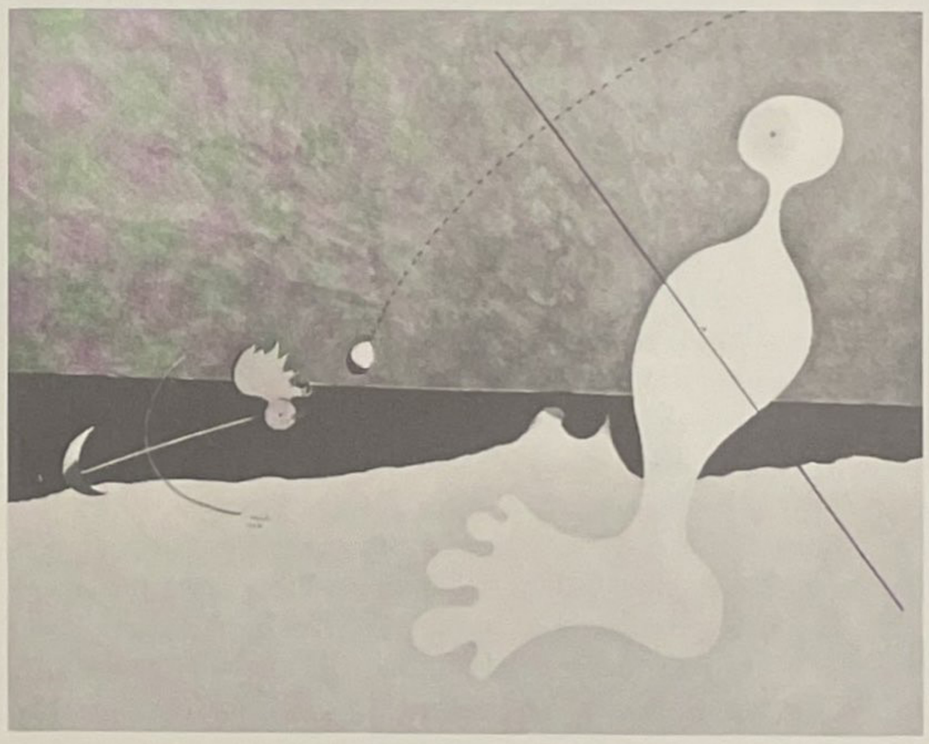
The double image

An important factor in Dali's method was his ability to conceive shapes that would have, simultaneously, two different sets of meaning. Something which had one clear meaning in a vertical position would turn into a startlingly different form when seen horizontally, like Dali's distant African village which becomes a woman's profile when turned on its side. In other instances the two meanings exist within the same shape, alternating in the attention of the spectator as he connects them with separate associations. An example is a long level plane seen at one moment as a table top with telephone; at the next as a mile-long stretch of beach traversed by tiny figures.

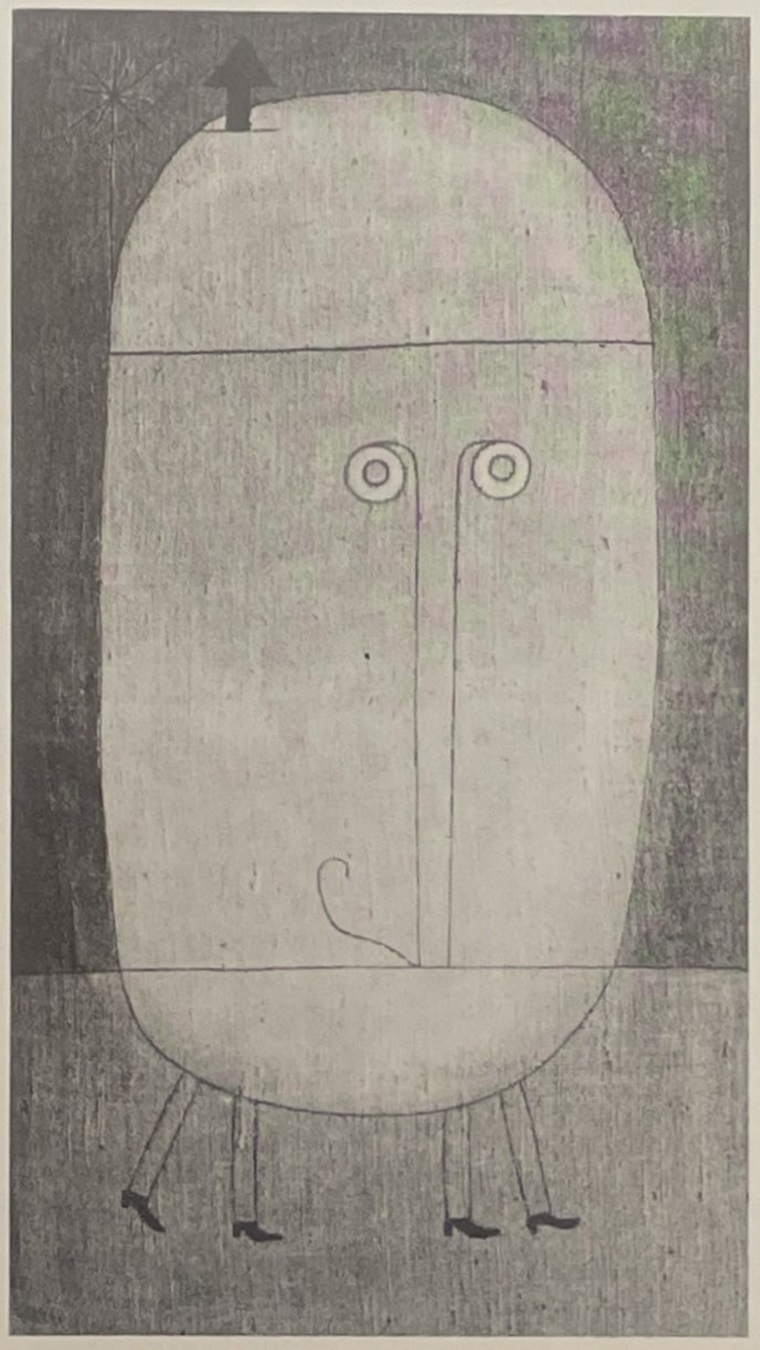
Invented dream-shapes

A technique as meticulous and illusionistic as Dali's was used by Yves Tanguy to describe not recognizable things, but imaginary invented objects. His bone-like shapes which combine suggestions of mineral, vegetable and animate forms, were probably

Miro introduced a refreshing humor to Surrealism with fantasies that look more child-like than they are. In **Person Throwing a Stone at a Bird** he has reduced the human being to a huge and aggressive foot whose ugly down-to-earth quality is in contrast to the bird's delicacy.



JOAN MIRO
Person Throwing a Stone at a Bird
The Museum of Modern Art



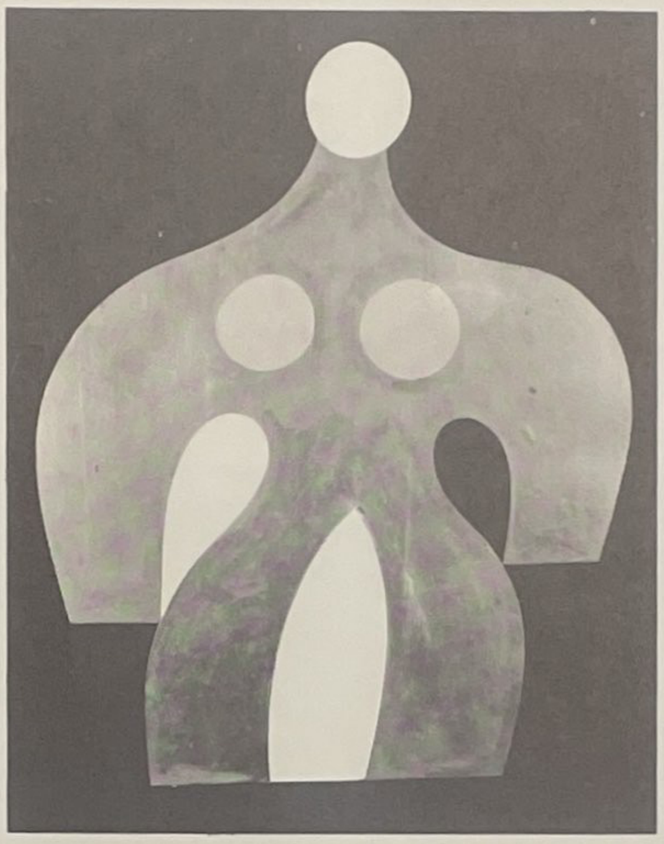
PAUL KLEE
Mask of Fear
Collection of Dr. Allan Roos

In Klee's **Mask of Fear** which makes a face as big as a house, the distortion is used for shock effect. The nose so enormously elongated and the eye with its hypnotic quality, are made as spontaneously as a doodle, but with the knowledge of a trained artist whose hand and eye weigh every change of pressure in the line. Many meanings can be read into the image, but the impact on the spectator is visual rather than logical.

MARC CHAGALL
To Russia, Asses and Others
Musee National d'Art Moderne, Paris

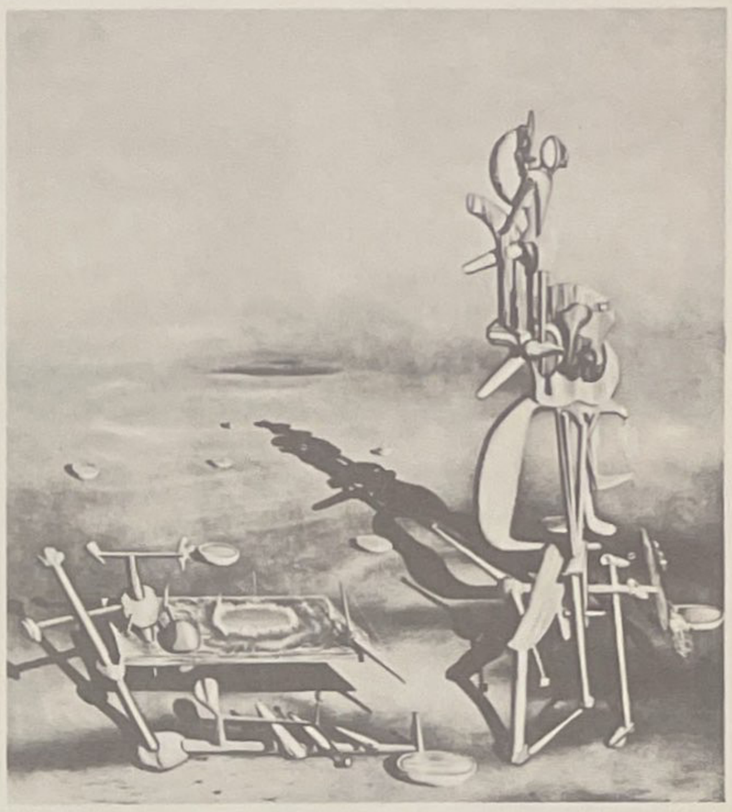
Although Marc Chagall is often claimed by the Surrealists, he was using such shocking devices as headless, flying figures in fantasies drawn from Russian Jewish folklore, as early as 1911, when he painted this picture, enigmatically titled **To Russia, Asses and Others.**

JEAN ARP
Figure (Three-Navel Man)
The Miller Company, Meriden, Conn.



Jean Arp carried the amoeba-like shapes typical of one branch of Surrealism almost to abstraction in such compositions as **Figure,** 1920.

YVES TANGUY
Divisibility Undefined
Room of Contemporary Art, Albright Art Gallery



Limitless horizons and lengthened shadows give a dream-like quality to Yves Tanguy's fantastic world of invented objects, titled in this case **Divisibility Undefined.**

originally suggested by the incongruous objects that the Surrealists put together from a bizarre assortment of odds and ends.

Perspective

Both Dali and Tanguy used effects of deep perspective to suggest the unlimited distances of a dream world: Dali in low, level plateaus and Tanguy in beach-like planes that merge with the sky. De Chirico had also employed steep planes, resembling ramps, which disappeared at an opposite angle from that of his street arcades. The resulting difference in vanishing points gave a sensation of physical insecurity that added to the haunting unreality of the scene.

Chance textures and frottage

Some of the Surrealists, most notably Max Ernst, used chance textures to suggest the kind of imaginary images that are discovered by almost everyone in the veins of marble or in stained, weather-beaten surfaces. A favorite way of arriving at such effects was by rubbing paper or canvas over a rough surface such as a plank or brick wall, a method called "frottage."

Collage

The Surrealists used the technique of pasting in a very different way from the Cubists. Cutting out reproductions of objects or parts of objects, they combined them to produce fantastic association of ideas. Max Ernst made a Surrealist novel by pasting together parts of pictures cut from Victorian engravings.

The Surrealist contribution

The Surrealist aim of developing a universal language of images derived from the artist's unconscious and communicated directly to the same unconscious level of the spectator, was not realized. They did succeed, however, in restoring interest in imaginative and symbolic qualities in painting. Their incongruous and arresting associations of objects proved enormously popular when adapted to commercial advertising and display.

Dada

What

An expression of revolt against conventional values in both art and life, which emerged as a reaction to the First World War. In art it took the form of bizarre constructions, satirical collages and crazy-quilt posters made in a spirit of mocking despair. Deliberately inartistic materials, such as those rescued from waste paper baskets were used in such expressions and they were organized "only by the laws of chance."

Who

Man Ray, American; Marcel Duchamp, French; Jean Arp, Swiss; George Grosz and Hans Richter, German; and Francis Picabia, French, are outstanding in the painters' contingent. They were joined by a number of distinguished poets.

Where

Originating in Zurich, Switzerland, the movement spread to Paris, Berlin and New York.

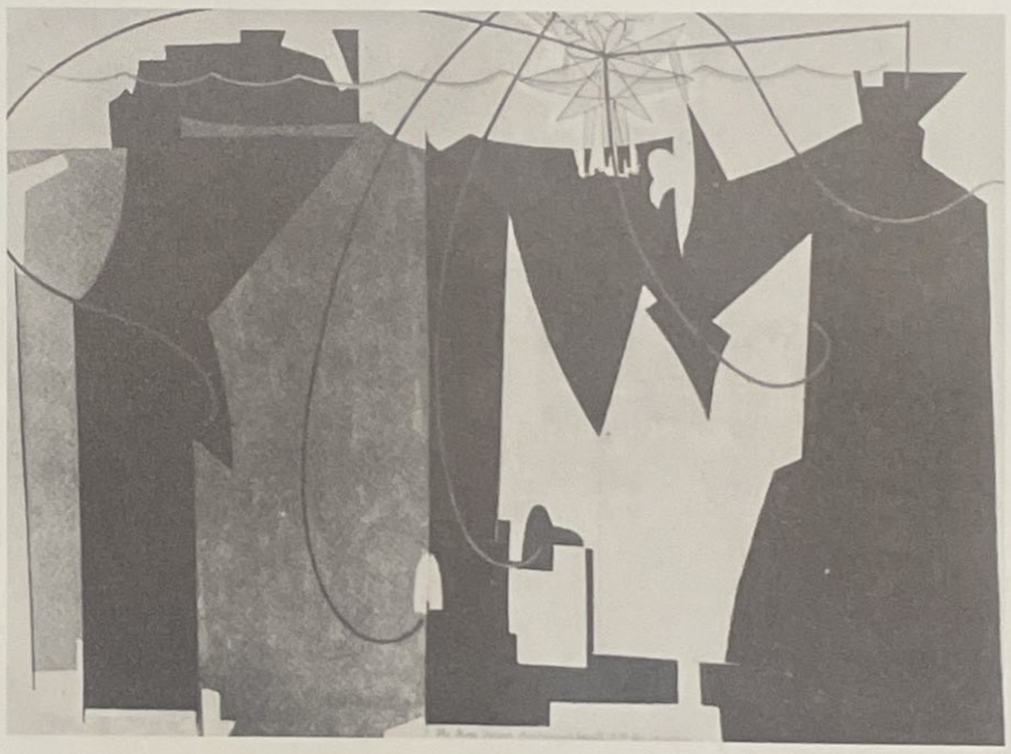
When

Dada activity extended from 1916 to 1921. With the breakup of the movement, some Dadaists joined the Surrealists.

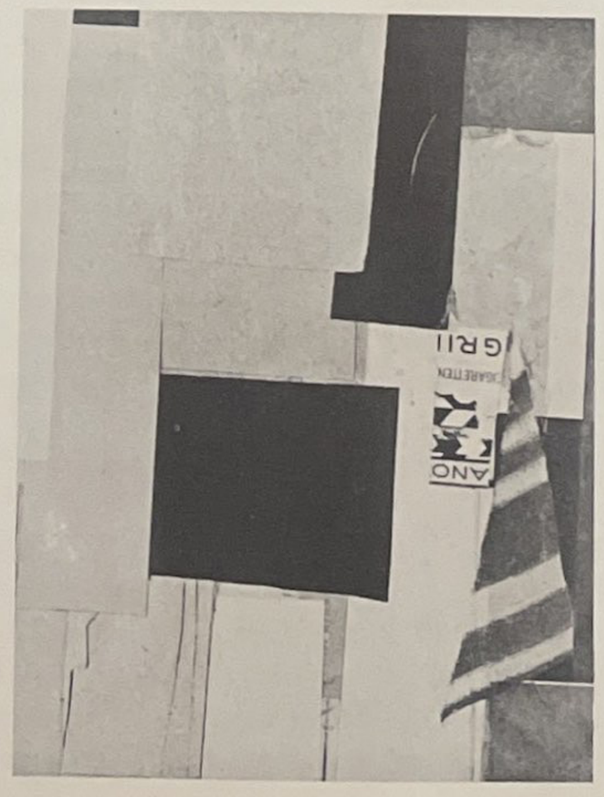
GEORGE GROSZ
Mechanic Heartfield
Collection A. Conger Goodyear

In his collage titled **Mechanic Heartfield,** 1920, George Grosz replaces his subject's heart with a mechanism of gears and springs which has been cut and pasted over the watercolor, as was also the street scene in the background.

MAN RAY
The Rope Dancer Accompanies Herself with Her Shadows
Collection of the State University of Iowa, Department of Art



The **Rope Dancer Accompanies Herself with Her Shadows** typifies the satirical humour and disquieting spatial design in the work of this American artist and photographer. Associated with both Dadaists and Surrealists, he often presented absurd subjects with a mocking, almost scientifically precise technique.



In accordance with Dada practice Kurt Schwitters constructed, from deliberately non-artistic materials rescued from waste-paper baskets, his delicately textured collages. His distinguished results were actually controlled by a very acute sensitivity to textures and colors.

KURT SCHWITTERS
Merzbild
The Miller Company, Meriden, Conn.

Futurism

What

Experiments with the expression of movement, by which forms were represented, either accompanied by symbols of movement or broken down into parts which are intended to be unified in the eye by an underlying dynamic rhythm. Sequences of images often resemble those of stroboscopic photography. Although derived from Cubist use of simultaneity, Futurism was more emotional and violent. A central part of its program was a glorification of the machine and of war.

Who

Carlo Carrà, Luigi Russolo, Gino Severini, Giacomo Balla and Umberto Boccioni inspired by the poet Marinetti, who later became a Fascist senator. Marcel Duchamp was very much influenced by Futurism, especially in 1912-1913.

Where

Italy, with influence extending to centers in France and the United States.

When

1909 is the date of the Futurist manifesto. The active period of the original Futurist group ended around 1916.

GIACOMO BALLA
Leash in Motion
A. Conger Goodyear Collection

MARCEL DUCHAMP
Nude Descending a Staircase
Courtesy of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia

Marcel Duchamp, in his famous **Nude Descending a Staircase,** 1912, emulated the dynamics of Futurism, using effects similar to those of stroboscopic photography. Duchamp's figure, however, is abstracted in the manner of Cubism and his method is less systematic and more inventive than the Futurists'.

Leash in Motion by Giacomo Balla, shows the Futurist's attempt to represent movement through space through effects similar to those produced by certain kinds of stroboscopic photography, and perhaps suggested by the movies. The centrifugal motions of the dog's legs and the swinging of the chain have been represented by a number of arrested, instantaneous views juxtaposed in rhythmic, overlapping sequences.

Gino Severini's **Armored Train,** 1915, shows the mechanized aspect of Futurism and its glorification of war.

GINO SEVERINI
Armored Train
Private Collection, New York

The expression of mood in realist idioms

JOSE C. OROZCO
The Subway (1928)
Collection of The Museum of Modern Art

EDWARD HOPPER
Early Sunday Morning
Collection of The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

Painting the American scene continues to be the objective of a number of vigorous artists who have rejected the extremes of experimentation. Such artists as Edward Hopper, Grant Wood, Orozco (Mexico) and Charles Burchfield, however, have insisted that painting is the artist's means of expressing the deepest human reactions to his world rather than merely a way of presenting appealing snapshot views of nature. Their subjects have frequently been chosen for their expressiveness of a certain bleakness and irony in our rural or city life. Although each has based his style largely on traditional elements stemming from the value compositions of the Renaissance, simplifications and mild distortions show that these artists are aware of contemporary directions.

CHARLES BURCHFIELD
November Evening
Courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art

GRANT WOOD
American Gothic
Courtesy of The Art Institute of Chicago

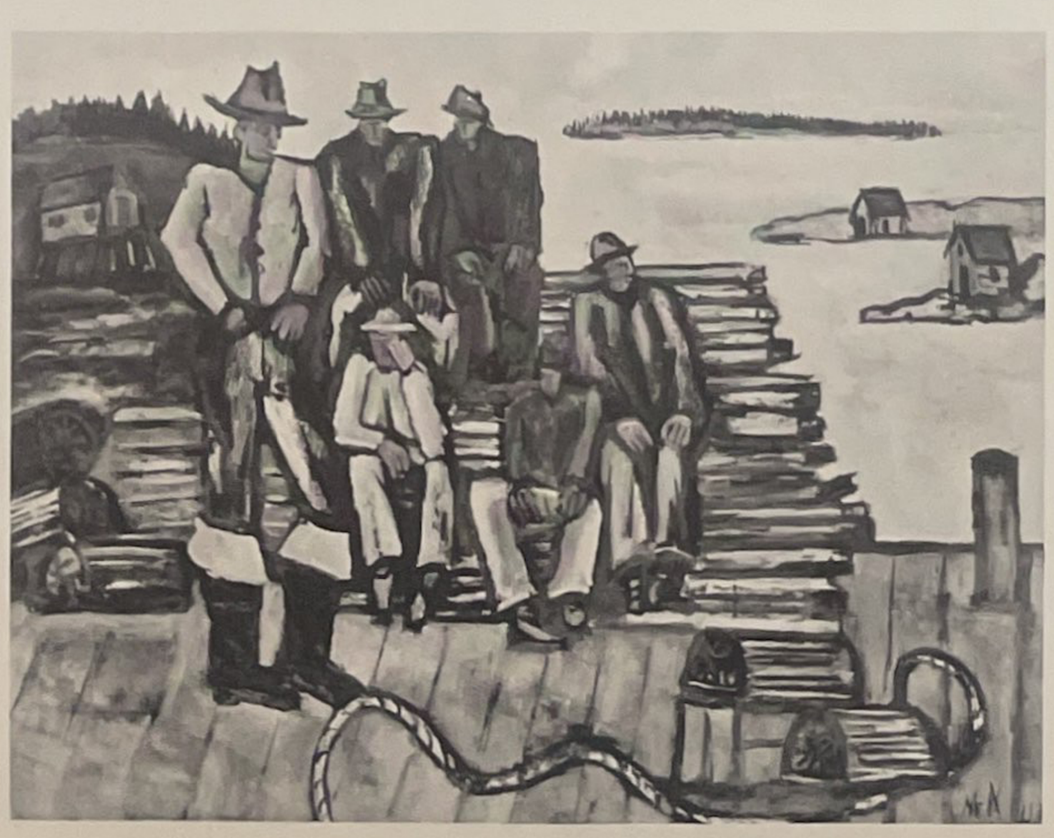
BEN SHAHN
Father and Child
Collection of The Museum of Modern Art
Gift of James Thrall Soby

JACK LEVINE
The Old and the New
From the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Earle Ludgin

Emotional distortion

Many American artists found in Expressionist distortion a ready tool for projecting basic truths about peoples' lives. Discarding all accidental aspects of their subjects, these painters preferred to enlarge on just those qualities that would most effectively drive home the human drama. Jack Levine used slashing brushstrokes and broken forms to depict the effects of slum living on the human spirit. Philip Evergood gave strangely distorted faces and bodies to his pictured victims of war and depression. Ben Shahn characterized the humble heroes of his pictures with simplified, linear means borrowed from primitive works and from folk art. Considerably before any of these the pioneering American Expressionist, Marsden Hartley, had developed a style based on starkly simplified forms. His concern, however, was mainly for the bitter struggle of man with nature.

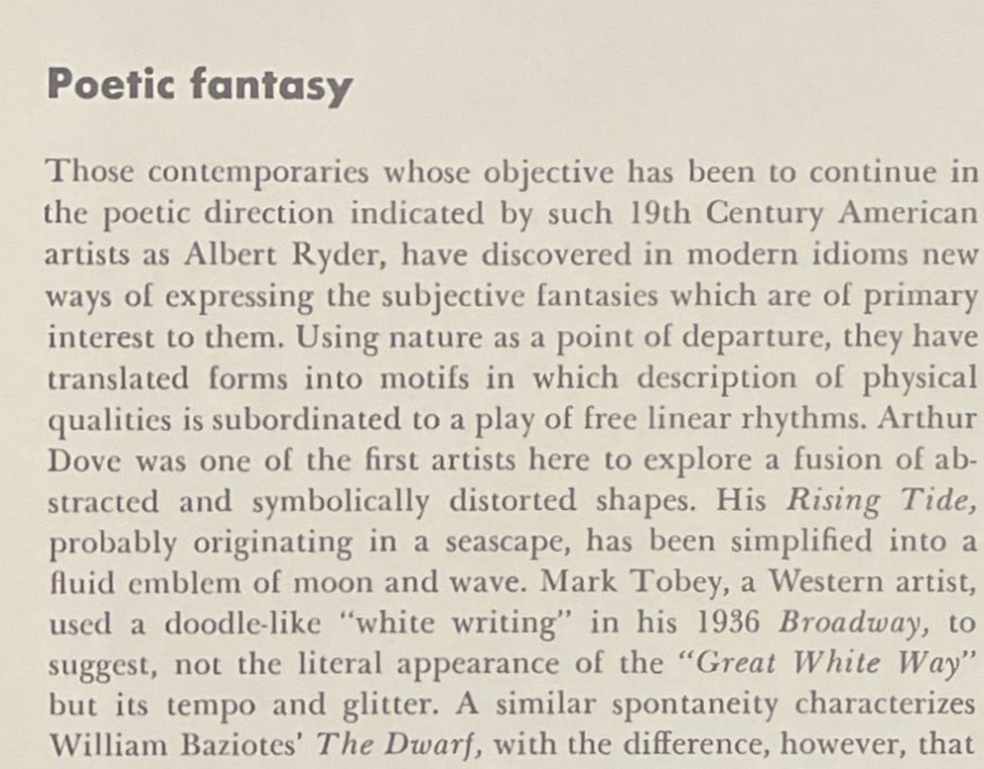
PHILIP EVERGOOD
Lily and the Sparrows
Collection of The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York



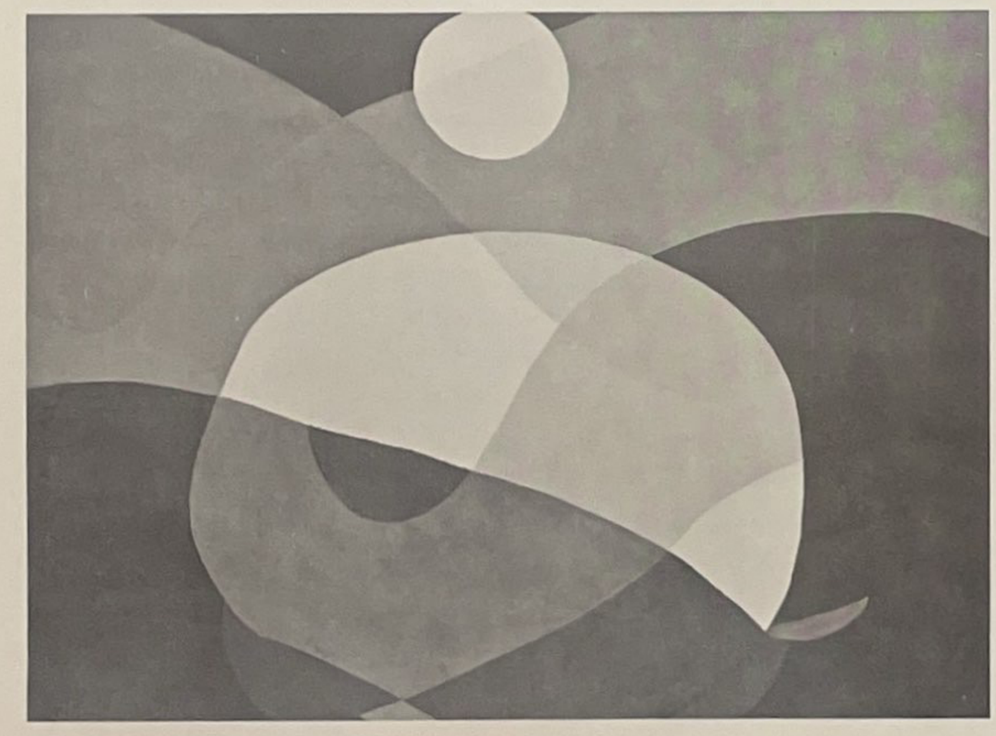
MARSDEN HARTLEY
Lobster Fishermen
Courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Poetic fantasy

Those contemporaries whose objective has been to continue in the poetic direction indicated by such 19th Century American artists as Albert Ryder, have discovered in modern idioms new ways of expressing the subjective fantasies which are of primary interest to them. Using nature as a point of departure, they have translated forms into motifs in which description of physical qualities is subordinated to a play of free linear rhythms. Arthur Dove was one of the first artists here to explore a fusion of abstracted and symbolically distorted shapes. His *Rising Tide,* probably originating in a seascape, has been simplified into a fluid emblem of moon and wave. Mark Tobey, a Western artist, used a doodle-like "white writing" in his 1936 *Broadway,* to suggest, not the literal appearance of the *"Great White Way"* but its tempo and glitter. A similar spontaneity characterizes William Baziotes' *The Dwarf,* with the difference, however, that it apparently was painted without immediate reference to a concrete reality. In *Red Votive Lights,* Loren MacIver, using an unusual close-up view, so stressed the rhythmic sequence of the candles, that it is only at second glance that we see more than an abstract pattern.

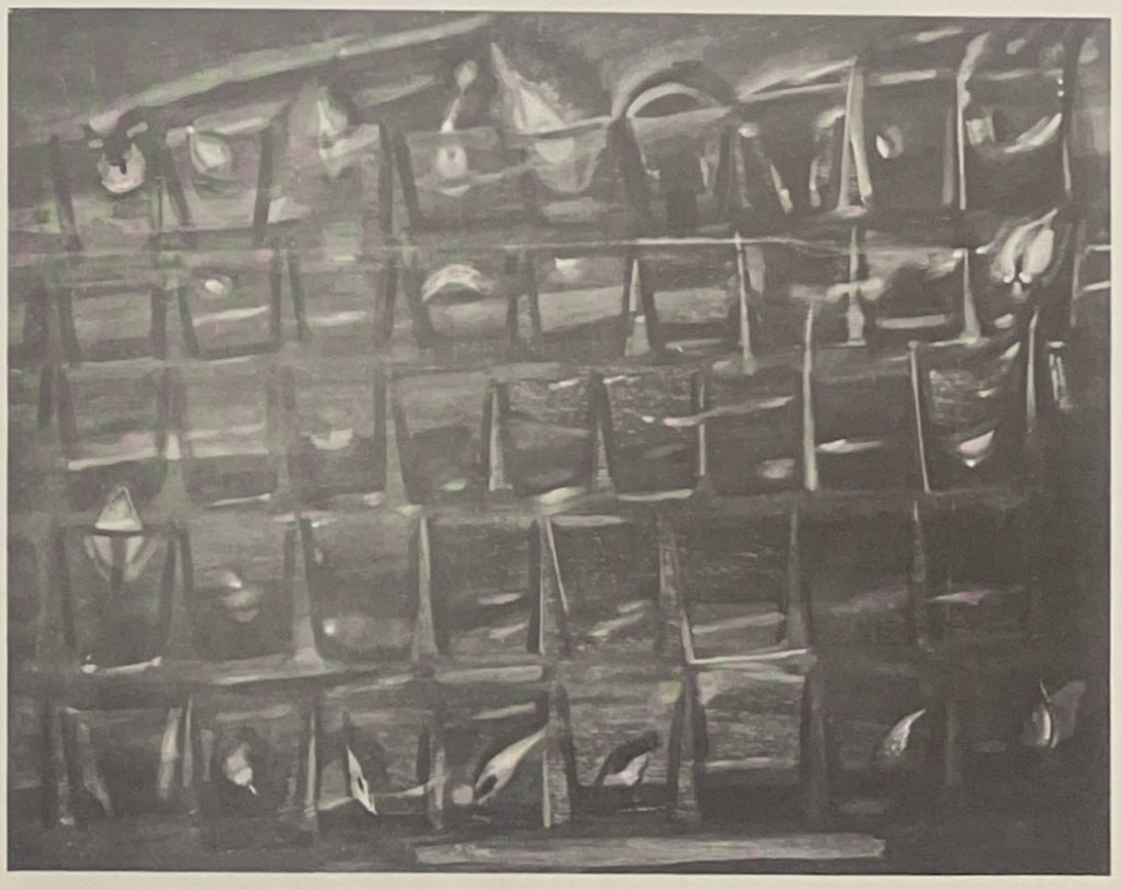


ARTHUR DOVE
Rising Tide
From the Collection of Mrs. Ernest Frederick Eidlitz, New York City



WILLIAM BAZIOTES
Dwarf
The Museum of Modern Art, A. Conger Goodyear Fund

MARK TOBEY
Broadway
Courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art



LOREN MAC IVER
Red Votive Lights
The Museum of Modern Art, James Thrall Soby Fund

HENRY KOERNER
Monkey Bars
Courtesy Midtown Galleries
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Robert Sherry

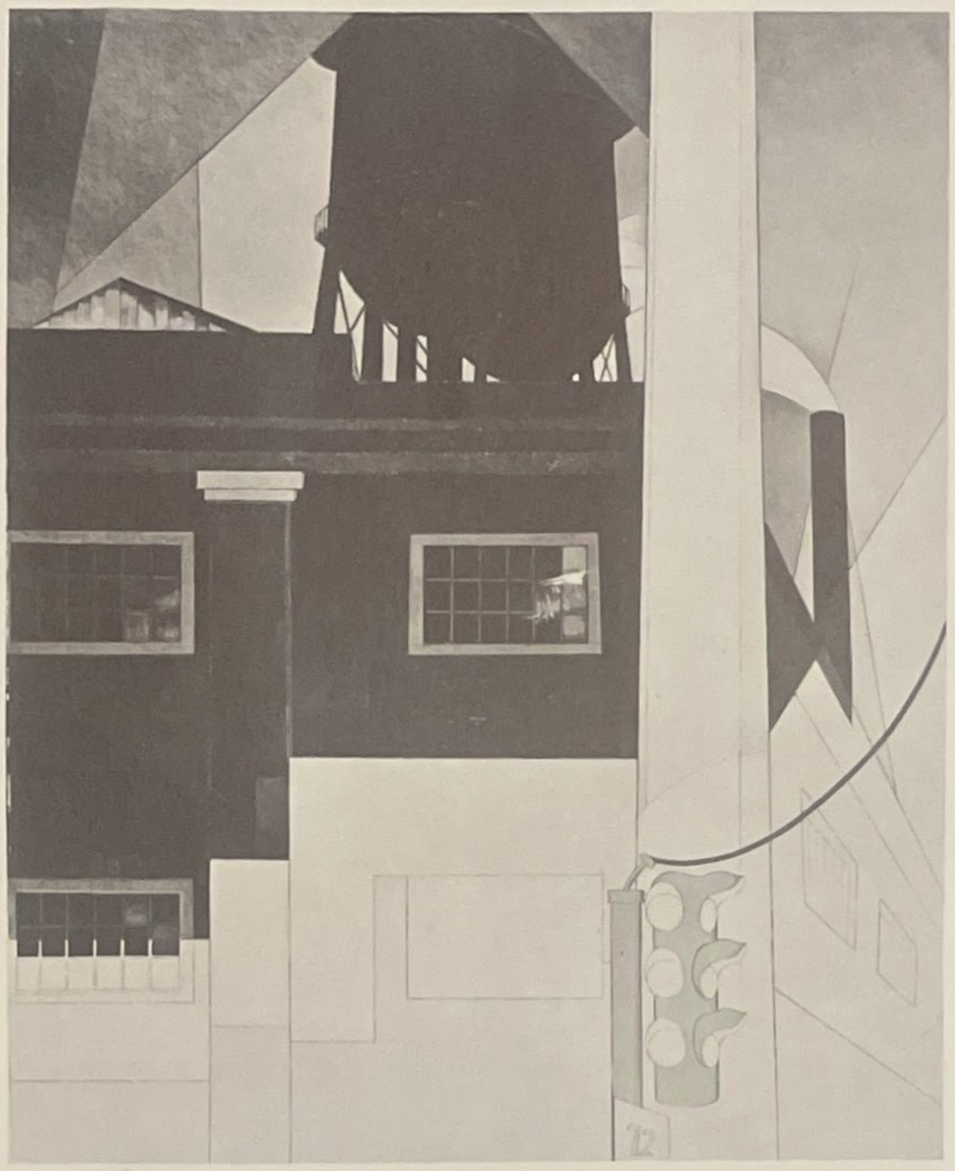
Magic realism

A microscopic type of realism, familiar in America through the still-life paintings of several 19th Century artists, was turned to the expression of quite a different content in the Nineteen Thirties, after the advent of Surrealism. A number of artists, perhaps following the examples of Dali's "hand painted dream photographs," introduced trompe-l'oeil renderings of familiar things in unfamiliar and arresting juxtapositions. "Magic Realism," the name given this style, helps distinguish it from the related, though more bizarre and "Freudian" one of Surrealism. Both Andrew Wyeth in his pathetic *Christina's World,* 1948, and John Atherton in the bleak *Christmas Eve,* 1941, used the isolation of ordinary things in a conscious (as opposed to Surrealism's unconscious) symbolism. Peter Blume suggested an incongruous monster by the chance association of a moss-topped rock and driftwood in his *Key West Beach,* 1940. Henry Koerner altered reality more drastically in his *Monkey Bars,* 1947. By using sudden changes in scale he symbolizes a trap in which his brooding pair seem to be caught.

JOHN ATHERTON
Christmas Eve
The Museum of Modern Art

PETER BLUME
Key West Beach
Collection Mr. and Mrs. James Thrall Soby

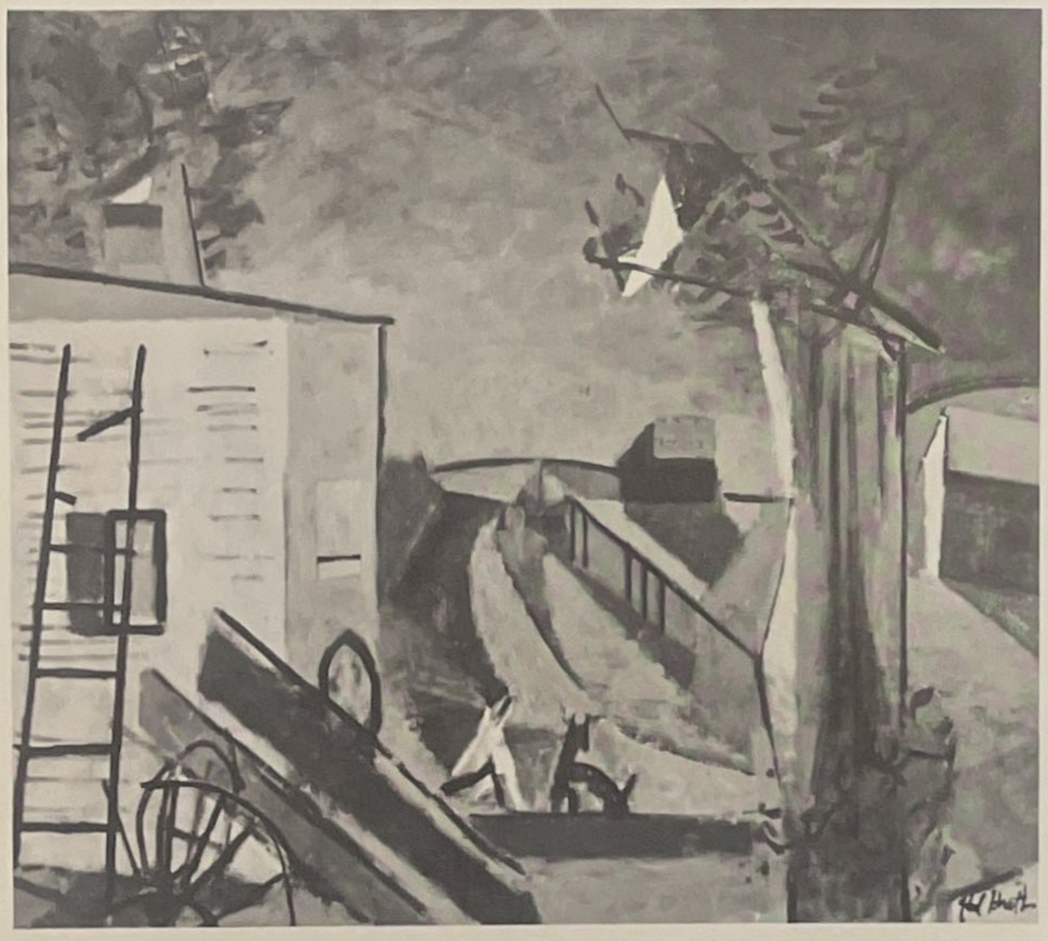
ANDREW WYETH
Christina's World
The Museum of Modern Art



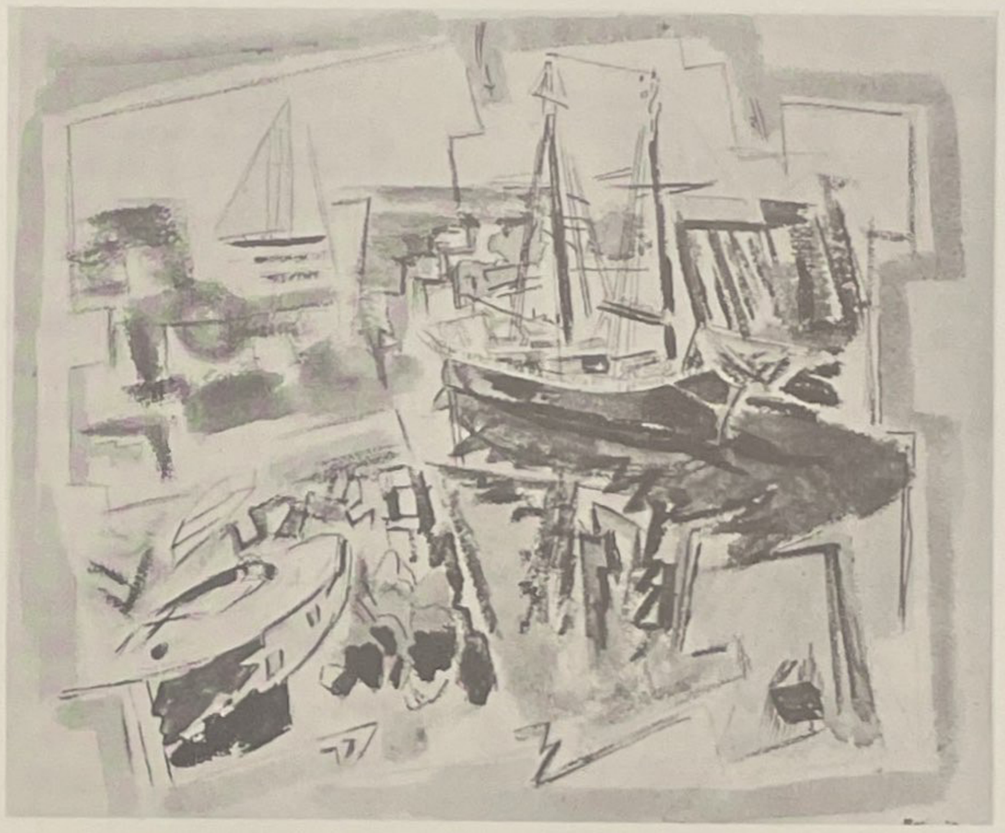
CHARLES DEMUTH
The Home of the Brave, 1931
Courtesy of The Art Institute of Chicago

Abstracting from nature

After the 1913 Armory Show, some American artists saw in the new abstract styles a means of revitalizing an art derived from nature. The process of simplifying and flattening shapes was welcomed by them as a means of clarifying the vague forms and getting rid of the clichés that prevailed in much landscape painting. John Marin, one of the "old masters of modern art" in this country, divided his picture surfaces into planes recalling Cézanne, but his rapid and intense transcription of forests, mountains and sea is actually more emotional and Expressionist. Karl Knaths, too, by composing in flat planes, preserved and even heightened the lyrical qualities of such Cape Cod scenes as *The Moon*. Both Stuart Davis and Charles Demuth adapted Cubist structures to their original conceptions of the city. Demuth worked factory facades and traffic signals into designs of a classical severity while Davis translated billboards and gasoline pumps into hard, active shapes in jazzy tempos.



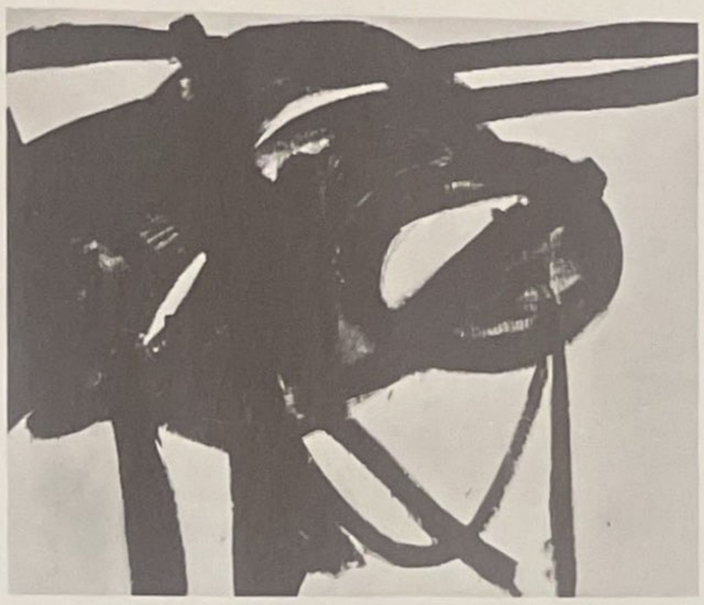
KARL KNATHS
The Moon
Worcester Art Museum



JOHN MARIN
Deer Island and Boats
Collection of Mr. Keith Warner

STUART DAVIS
Report from Rockport
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. William Lowenthal

FRANZ KLINE
Chief
The Museum of Modern Art, gift of Mr. and Mrs. David M. Solinger

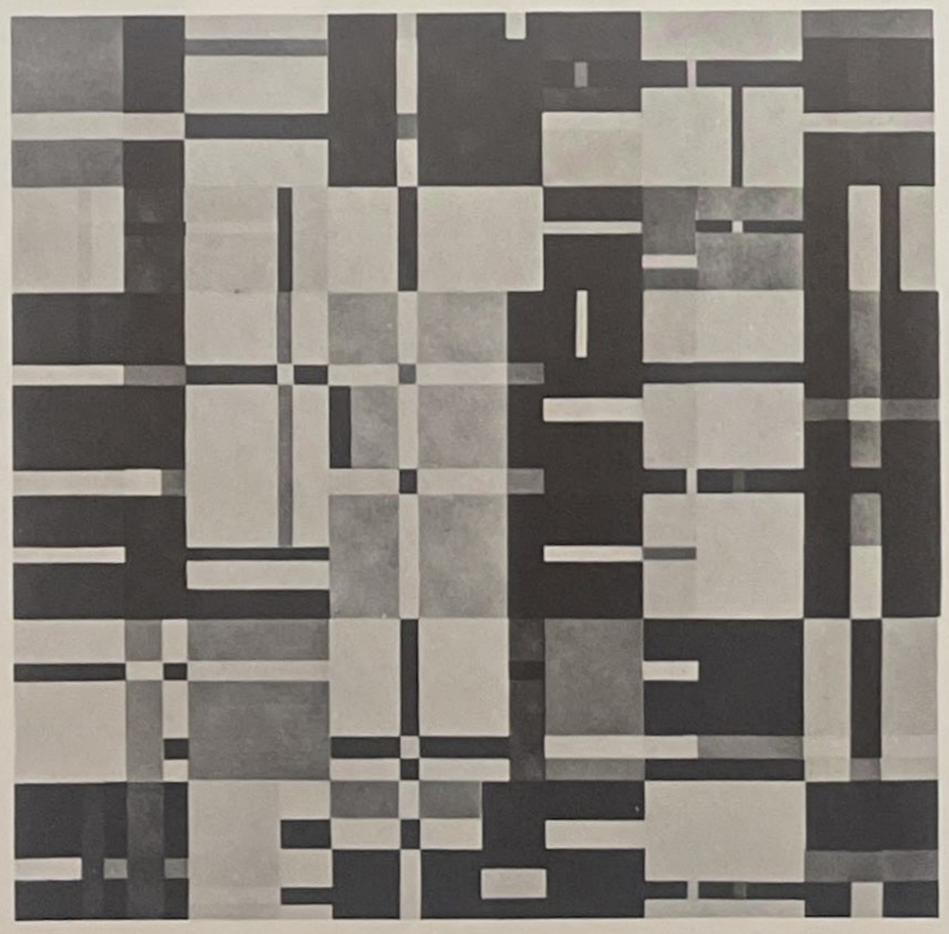


JAMES BROOKS
Tondo - 1951
Peridot Gallery

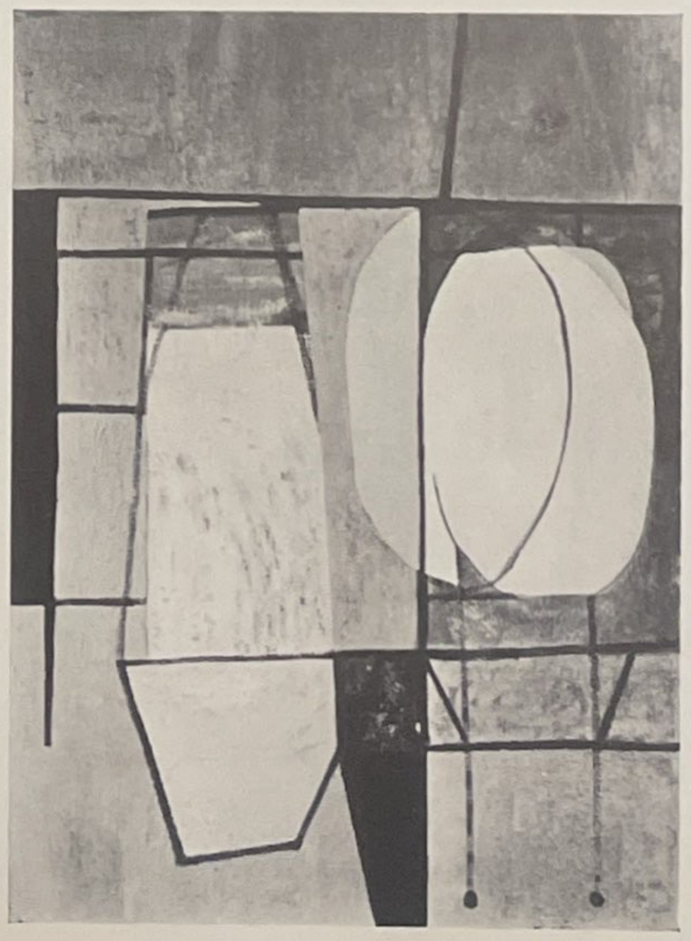
Abstract extremes

Most of those Americans who have adopted a completely non-representational idiom have used it to symbolize extremely personal states of feeling. The pure and fixed shapes of geometry appealed to those who wanted to create, on canvas, the ideal and orderly relationships not found in the outside world, while explosive rhythms were adopted by a different group who sought emotional release from the conflicts and tensions of life. Usually they have arrived at an entirely abstract style after various stages of abstracting from nature: some, like Arshile Gorky and Franz Kline with a free-swinging brush, others like Burgoyne Diller, through a method of simplifying into geometrical units with the "T" square and tapes introduced by the Dutch de Stijl artists. James Brooks and Robert Motherwell are outstanding in a group who have combined elements from both these abstract extremes, using fluid as well as angular shapes. Different as are the qualities in the work of these artists, they share a similar regard for the two-dimensional surface of the picture. In each case, however, shapes are thought of as planes in space and not merely as flat, decorative areas, and relationships are expressive rather than appealing to the eye.

ARSHILE GORKY
Agony
The Museum of Modern Art, A. Conger Goodyear Fund



BURGOYNE DILLER
Third Theme, 46-52
Rose Fried Gallery



ROBERT MOTHERWELL
Western Air
The Museum of Modern Art

Contemporary figure painting

Partly as a reaction to "abstract extremes" there has recently been renewed interest in the figure among painters of considerable stature and diverse viewpoint, as these examples illustrate. Many of the technical discoveries of the abstract movement are being used in the work of the new generation of figure painters.

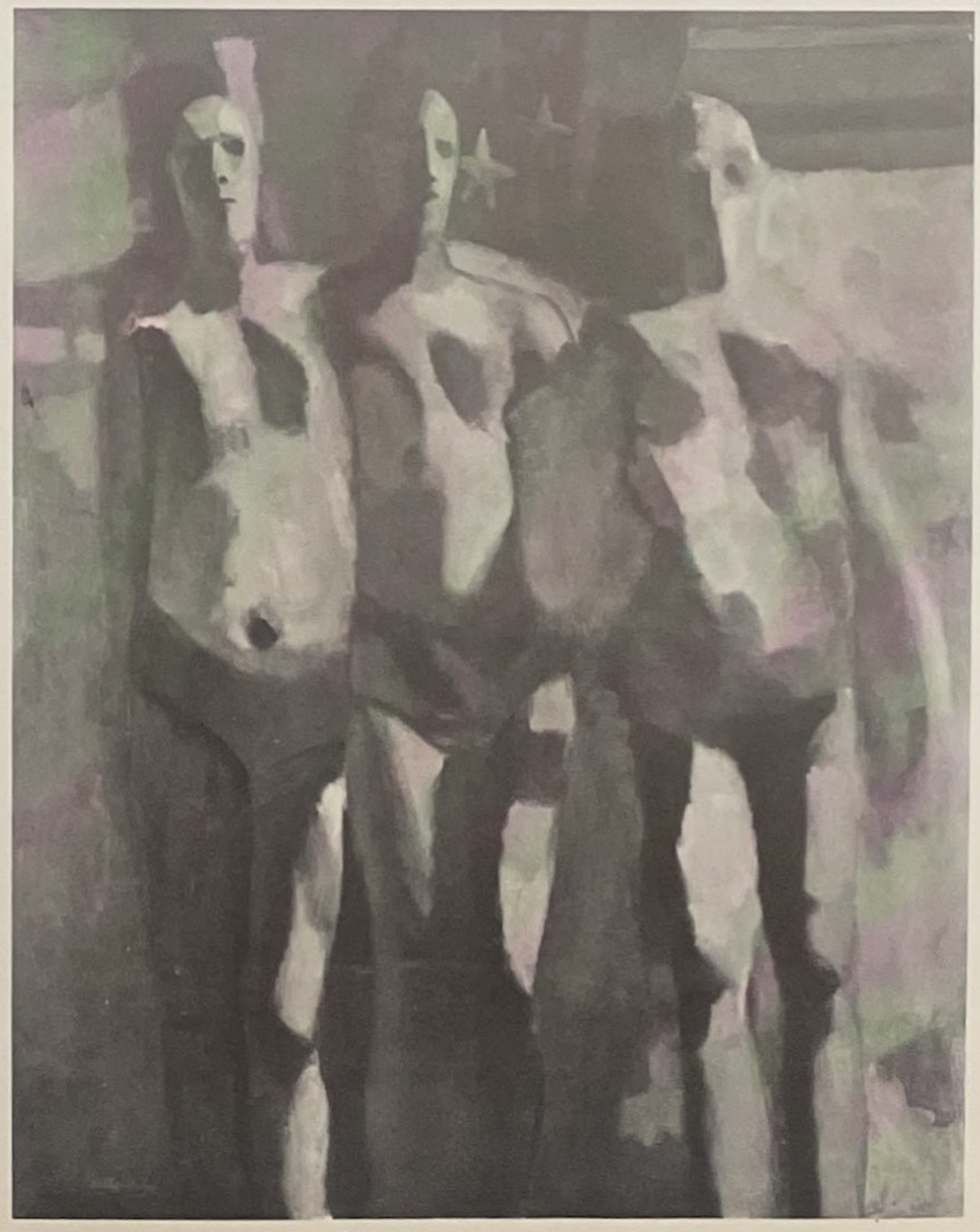
The painting below, **Portrait of a Woman,** is by Willem de Kooning, who has been a leader among avant-garde artists for years. Our first reaction may be shock and a quick denial that this is a true mirror of humanity. Yet the image is powerful: it has vigor and character and we remember it. The artist has used a sophisticated abstract vocabulary to make what may strike many as a penetrating comment on the anxiety and disorientation of our times.

WILLEM DE KOONING

Portrait of a Woman
Collection of Roy R. and Marie S. Neuberger

Three Swimmers, by Ralph Della-Volpe, illustrates a somewhat more traditional approach to the figure. However the emphasis is more on structure than characterization. Although anatomy and light and shadow are factors here, we feel that the artist has used them mainly as points of departure. The blockiness of the figures suggests a concern with form akin to that of the Cubists. And the somewhat arbitrary use of light and dark areas (notice, for instance, how the light side of the figure on the right dissolves into the light area of the background) implies a strong concern for abstract patterning.

Elsa Maxwell, by René Bouché, is a very factual portrait of a famous person. Unlike the other paintings shown here, this one immediately engages us on the level of characterization. Despite the frankness of the portrait there is an appealing elegance present, as if the artist were carefully balancing his sense of a way of life and his insights into a particular human being. He is making an observation on society that has precedents in the work of Goya and Hogarth. Simultaneously in the drawing and composition he reveals his awareness of contemporary attitudes.

RALPH DELLA-VOLPE

Three Swimmers
Babcock Galleries, New York City